

Oxford Thinking
Ideas that change the world



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD



*The Campaign for
the University of Oxford
Campaign Report
2016/17*





Liesl Elder
Chief Development Officer
University of Oxford

Celebrating the impact of our donors' generosity is one of the great pleasures of my role here at Oxford. Across the University, there are many wonderful stories of how philanthropy is enabling remarkable things to happen.

I am delighted to share with you the Campaign Report for 2016/17, which features just a few of the highlights of the work made possible thanks to your support. From furthering our understanding of the societal impacts of foster care, to creating opportunities for students at both undergraduate and graduate level, this work is generating real benefits around the world.

Your donations help to create an inspirational environment in which students can fulfil their potential. They also motivate our world-leading academic community to drive forward ground-breaking research and innovation. I hope you enjoy the report.

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Discover more about
the impact of your support at:
www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/report16-17

Thanks to your support this year...

... opportunities for graduate students in history have been created

More than £70,000 has been given by alumni and friends of the Faculty of History toward the History Tomorrow Fund. The fund will support scholarships for graduate students and will provide opportunities for the brightest scholars to come to Oxford, regardless of their background. In 2016, 52% of students who were accepted onto a graduate course declined their place and lack of funds was cited as the primary reason.

Professor Martin Conway, Chair of the History Faculty Board, says: 'Graduate study is the lifeblood of history as a discipline. It is the way that knowledge advances and that the profession renews itself. Our graduate students gain the knowledge and intellectual confidence that equips them to go on to play active roles in every part of society.'

The support that the faculty has received from this fund will be used directly to assist the scholars of the future.



... Oxford can build a LIFE-changing game

More than 100 donors were inspired to give in excess of £60,000 to a project aimed at protecting the health of children in Africa, following the launch of a crowdfunding campaign last year.

Through the development of an innovative scenario-based mobile gaming platform, the LIFE project (Life-saving Instruction For Emergencies) aims to give healthcare workers the knowledge they need to provide life-saving treatment to newborns, children, mothers and others.

The money raised is now enabling the team to construct a prototype of the game, which is being user tested in Kenya and the UK. It teaches healthcare workers the latest World Health Organization guidelines, and contains built-in reminders to stay up to date and refresh what has been learned. There are also plans to link it with a professional accreditation strategy.

Professor Mike English, Consultant Paediatrician and Senior Research Fellow at KEMRI-Wellcome Trust in Nairobi, says: 'Face-to-face training is very expensive to provide, and is hard to deliver at high coverage across large countries with dispersed health facilities. If you set up the correct infrastructure, you can reach a much greater number of people far more efficiently through a platform like LIFE.'





... the Watlington Hoard has been saved for the nation

The Ashmolean Museum has succeeded in raising £1.35 million to purchase King Alfred's coins. More than 800 members of the public supported the appeal to give the treasure a permanent home.

A lead gift was provided through a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £1.05 million. The grant helped to acquire the hoard, as well as assisting with conservation, display, touring and educational programmes.

Dating from the end of the 870s, the Watlington Hoard contains over 200 Anglo-Saxon coins. These coins can potentially shed light on how the once-great kingdom of Mercia came to be absorbed into the emerging kingdom of England by Alfred and his successors.

Dr Xa Sturgis, Director of the Ashmolean Museum, says: 'The Watlington Hoard is one of the most exciting and important acquisitions we have ever made. To be able to keep the hoard in the county and put it on display with the Ashmolean's Anglo-Saxon collections, which include the world-famous Alfred Jewel, was an opportunity we could not miss.'

Oxford Thinking Campaign statistics

Amount raised this year

£192m

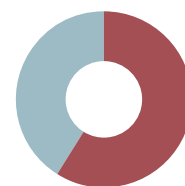
01/08/16 to 31/07/17 including cumulative college data to 31/01/17

Amount raised since the
start of the campaign

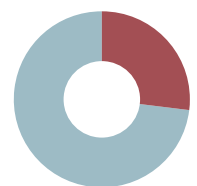
£2.66bn

Including cumulative college data to 31/01/17

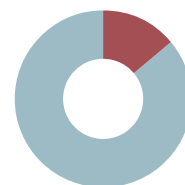
Where donations come
from (University only)



59%
United Kingdom

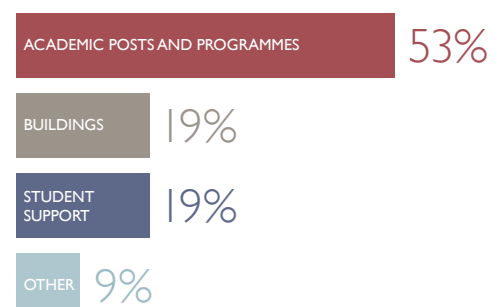


27%
North America



14%
Rest of the world

Destination of campaign gifts
by priority area (University only)



Tackling the complexity of modern conservation

Research at Oxford is revealing the ways in which social, ecological and behavioural factors interact and affect key issues in conservation.

‘We come into conservation as nature lovers, as animal lovers, and because we want to save the environment,’ explains E J Milner-Gulland, Tasso Leventis Professor of Biodiversity and Fellow of Merton College. ‘However it soon becomes clear that in order to save the species you want to save, you need to understand what it is that motivates people, what drives their behaviour.’

Professor Milner-Gulland is a firm believer that ‘conservation is about people’, and has spent over 20 years examining the incentives, pressures and challenges facing individual decision-makers. ‘Once we understand this,’ she says, ‘we can look at how to design conservation interventions that are fair to local people, that improve the lives of local people, that are done with the consent of local people, but that are also going to conserve.’

Professor Milner-Gulland brought the Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science (ICCS) with her when she moved to Oxford in 2015. Based in the Department of Zoology, ICCS brings together conservation scientists, graduate students, postdocs and research assistants to address some of the key challenges faced by humanity in halting the decline of global biodiversity.

‘We don’t do anything that is just abstract; we want everything to have real-world impact,’ explains Professor Milner-Gulland. Researchers in ICCS work in collaboration with NGOs, government agencies and businesses to answer questions that are relevant to them, while also exploring the social and cultural impacts of conservation through their projects. ‘We know that in order for our research to make a difference, we have to work with end-users right from the beginning,’ she adds.

In one such study, Professor Milner-Gulland and her team hope to understand the impacts of a hydroelectric dam recently built across the Nile in Uganda. To make up for conservation loss during the dam’s construction, the Ugandan government conducted a biodiversity-offset project. She explains: ‘As well as seeing if this has had a positive effect on the environment, we’re also interested in finding out how local people valued these natural resources culturally, and what – if anything – can be done to compensate damage to this cultural value as a result of the project.’

Professor Milner-Gulland’s research also extends to the illegal wildlife trade – a growing threat to global biodiversity, which is estimated to be worth up to \$10 billion annually. As part of an interdisciplinary team funded by the Oxford Martin School, she is exploring how consumer behaviour can be changed. ‘We’re looking at it from a range of different angles,’ she says. ‘One approach is taking messages from public health, where a lot of work is done around changing people’s behaviour. Can we apply that to the wildlife trade? Well, we’re having a go!’

Professor Milner-Gulland’s positivity about conservation is palpable. In a discipline in which bad news and pessimism can often predominate, she feels that ‘it’s important to focus on where it has worked, on trying to understand why it’s worked, and then on making that case.’

In early 2017, Professor Milner-Gulland spearheaded the Conservation Optimism Summit, an event celebrating positive thinking in conservation. ‘People need to know that their actions do make a difference,’ she stresses, ‘whether that’s governments or businesses or individuals or conservationists themselves. We have to celebrate both the small and the large steps forward, in order to be able to keep moving in the right direction.’

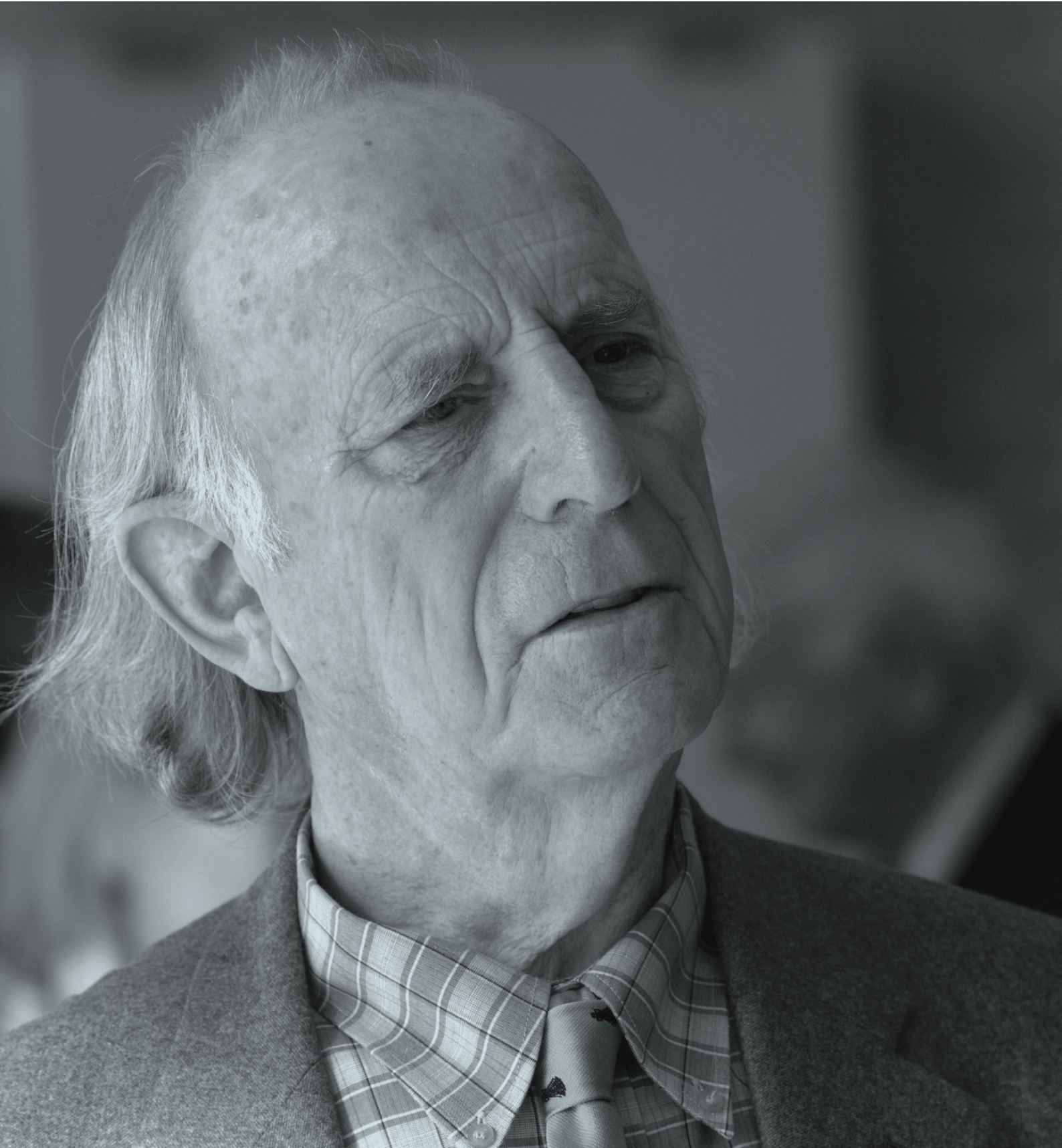


This support has given me so much freedom to develop my research.

E J Milner-Gulland



A polymath's legacy



Peter Placito and his family were devoted supporters of Oxford during their lifetime, and afterwards, through generous bequests. The legacies left by the Placito family ensure that their commitment to Oxford is still strongly felt today.

‘Polymath is a good way to describe him,’ says John Hewitt, Foundation Fellow of Wadham College and long-time friend of Peter’s. ‘He was interested in everyone and everything.’

Peter Placito came up to Oxford in 1951 to read Chemistry at Wadham. He later went on to work in the natural resources industry, before relocating to Portugal in the 1970s and pledging much of his time to helping the University and his college.

Peter’s interests at Wadham were varied. From supporting the chapel and the gardens, to enhancing the student experience through gifts to sport and outreach, Peter’s generosity touched every aspect of college life. ‘He wanted to ensure his support had real impact,’ continues John Hewitt. ‘The college was an extension of his family; he always had its interests at heart.’

One of Peter’s greatest passions was cricket. It helped keep him closely involved in the life of the college and he became Chairman of the President’s XI team in 1983, which featured an annual fixture bringing alumni and current students together. Peter’s commitment to cricket at Wadham is still visible today via a portrait of C B Fry which hangs in the hall, commissioned thanks to a successful fundraising campaign initiated by Peter.

Supporting medical progress

Outside of college pursuits, the Placito family’s interest in medicine developed in two specific areas reflecting the care the family had received from Oxford clinicians in these fields. These were cancer and the spread of tumours, and gastroenterology. Research in these areas was supported through the Lee Placito Medical Fund, demonstrating the strong connection that Peter had forged with Professor Emanuel Lee, a gastrointestinal surgeon of international repute and Fellow of St Cross College. One of the most significant projects that the Lee Placito Fund helped to support during Peter’s lifetime was the establishment of the Sidney Truelove Chair in Gastroenterology, named after an Oxford Professor who developed the study of gastroenterology at Oxford from 1937.

Latterly, Peter became particularly interested in neuroscience, specifically in the area of deep brain stimulation, sparked by the plight of a friend who suffered from Parkinson’s disease. He developed a friendship with Tipu Aziz, Professor of Neurosurgery, and witnessed live surgery on several occasions. Professor Aziz says: ‘It was always a pleasure to talk to Peter about our work. He was fascinated by the combination of precision engineering and surgical innovation.’

‘Peter’s curiosity and interest in all that Oxford had to offer meant that he didn’t stop at involving himself with just his college and his interests in medicine,’ says John Hewitt. Peter’s love of Portugal led him to organise an annual field trip for students of biological sciences, focusing on the flora of the Algarve. He also volunteered his time and his contacts in support of other University priorities.

Since his death in 2009, Peter’s legacy and those of his mother and brother have supported a wide range of initiatives across the University. From support for students and teaching posts at Wadham, to the creation of postdoctoral research fellowships in neurosurgery and the Lee Placito Professorship in Gastroenterological Disease, Peter and his family have left a legacy of real impact, as well as many fond memories for all those who knew him.



The Wadham 1953 First XI cricket team.
Peter sits on the front row, second from the right.

● ●
*He wanted to
ensure his support
had real impact.*

John Hewitt

Paving the way for success

From the outreach programmes that raise awareness of the benefits of higher education, to the scholarships that make it possible for the brightest students to study at Oxford, the support provided by donors is making a crucial difference to students.



Gurpal Khera *Reuben Scholar*

Reuben Scholar Gurpal Khera is reading for a BA in Oriental Studies, with a focus on Sanskrit, the ancient classical language of India. 'My family's heritage is Indian so I've been introduced to languages that directly branch from Sanskrit in the past,' explains Gurpal. 'I never thought I'd study it though, if I'm honest!'

Gurpal applied to Oxford after attending the University's UNIQ summer school programme. Open to students studying in their first year of further education, UNIQ offers a real insight into life at Oxford, with participants staying over in the colleges, attending lectures and tutorials, and engaging with top academics during their week-long residency.

By opening Oxford's doors in this way, the programme hopes to encourage aspiration among students who might not otherwise consider applying to the University. Gurpal recalls: 'The outreach work on behalf of UNIQ was key. I didn't think I would get into Oxford until I tried the summer school and realised that this is something that's achievable and enjoyable.' It was at UNIQ that Gurpal first tried her hand at Sanskrit, and discovered a love for it.

As a Reuben Scholar, Gurpal receives support to cover living costs as well as contributions toward her academic fees. 'It would be a lot more difficult to study here without the scholarship,' she says. 'It means I can be a bit more proactive which is really nice, attending activities and talks. With the bursary I can really look to the future.'





Sandra Ionescu *Frost Scholar*

After completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Florida, Sandra Ionescu came to Oxford in 2014 to read for an MSc in Pharmacology. ‘It was completely down to having the scholarship,’ she says, when recalling her initial decision to study here. ‘I knew about the University, but I would never have thought to apply without it. It just seemed unachievable to someone out of state school in America.’

For international students, a scholarship can mean the difference between taking up a place at Oxford or choosing an institution closer to home. Sandra considers herself ‘extremely lucky’ to have been awarded a Frost Scholarship – one of ten made available each year to students from Florida studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects.

Sandra graduated from her course in 2015, and is now in her second year of a DPhil in Chemical Biology. ‘During my master’s studies I was able to spend some

time in the lab of Professor Hagan Bayley,’ she says. ‘In fact I enjoyed it there so much that I ended up staying!’ She is now researching the way proteins in bacteria contribute to antibiotic resistance, and how they might be developed to serve other functions, such as biosensors.

Life as a scholar has clearly left a lasting impression on her. ‘I don’t know where I would be now had it not been for the scholarship,’ says Sandra. ‘The environment here changes you as a person – you’re always being challenged, and you have so many opportunities. The impact has been immeasurable.’

● ●
*The environment here
changes you as a person.*

Sandra Ionescu

*A human chain
that stretches back
into history*



The study of Arabic language and literature at Oxford is a tradition that stretches back centuries. As Professor Julia Bray explains, its future has now been secured thanks to a generous donation.

It was a teenage encounter with a book with an exquisite cover that first drew Professor Julia Bray to Arabic literature. 'Initially, I wasn't looking for the demanding side of literature, I was looking at the sheer pleasure and the enchantment,' she explains. 'It's wonderful to have that to fall back on, but of course there are other things as well.'

Forty years on, and Julia Bray now occupies one of the oldest and most prestigious chairs at the University of Oxford – the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Laudian Professorship of Arabic. Her time is divided between teaching students at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, and pursuing her own research on medieval Arabic writing, chiefly its social uses and cultural meanings.

'Literature is central to cultural memory and cultural consciousness, and therefore to the future,' says Professor Bray. 'It is what you feel you are now and where you feel you come from, that gives you a sense of what you could be.' She believes classical literature to be an integral part of historical understanding, explaining that: 'It says profound things about what people have felt and what they have aspired to. In every culture, classical literature is not a source of looking at the past in a glass case, but of thinking: what can I take from this to reconstruct myself?'

For undergraduate students reading Arabic at Oxford, the study of classical Arabic literature is compulsory – a requirement not always made at other universities. 'It's a small part of the syllabus here, but it's an important part,' notes Professor Bray. It is only by exposing students to a breadth of literature that, in her eyes, the history and culture of Arabs and Islam can truly be understood.

● ●
To me personally, this support means that the subject has a future.

Professor Julia Bray



In 2016, a generous benefaction from Mr Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain re-endowed the Laudian Chair in Arabic, securing the study of this important field at Oxford for future generations. 'The fact that this chair has been safeguarded after I retire means that classical Arabic literature is going to have at least one bastion in the UK,' says Professor Bray.

'Without the endowment,' she continues, 'there wouldn't have been the incentive to build the subject, as we are doing – it would all be too uncertain.' At Oxford, classical Arabic literature is a one-post subject, with no other provision for its teaching. If a post is suspended, it can take a gap of just one or two years for a course to become impossible to teach.

Professor Bray believes the on-going development of Arabic literature options for taught graduate degrees to be particularly important, given the number of students coming to Oxford with no prior experience of studying it. 'This is their only chance to do it,' she stresses. 'It's important to catch people who have an interest, and give them something to hang it on to.'

For Professor Bray, knowing that the subject has a future at Oxford has translated into greater 'energy, as well as optimism' for classical Arabic literature as a field, and she feels invigorated to find new ways of sharing her work beyond the bounds of the faculty. 'It's very enriching to be able to engage with the public. It's an enjoyable process that can really change the way you think,' she adds.

So far, this has involved collaborations with the Ashmolean Museum, and with The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) – the latter resulting in a programme of poetry translation and storytelling outreach steered by novelist and cultural historian Dame Marina Warner. Professor Bray also has a long-term commitment to the Library of Arabic Literature, which brings editions and translations of significant 7th- to 19th-century works to a wider public.

In all, Professor Bray's eagerness to share her passion for classical Arabic literature is unwavering. 'I find the literature very moving and it teaches me things,' she says. 'I think that we all need as much literary experience of every kind as we can get – it is the most radical and fundamental of educations.'

Fostering a brighter future



Oxford's Rees Centre is renowned for the quality of its research, and for the impact that its findings are having on helping vulnerable children and young people in care.

Despite on-going concern from policy-makers, practitioners, foster carers and teachers, the educational attainment of children in care has, for many years, languished well below the national average.

'At the moment, young people in care score 40% worse than their peers do at GCSE level,' explains Professor Judy Sebba, Director of Oxford's Rees Centre for Research in Fostering and Education. 'That's what we're trying to tackle in the long run, because your educational qualifications have such a significant impact on your later employability, engagement in crime, housing and mental health.'

The Rees Centre was established five years ago to help improve the life chances of children and young people in care. Based within the Department of Education, the centre's research team operate at the interface between social care and the education of looked-after children, conducting reviews of existing literature as well as running new studies in order to address issues raised by those involved in the care system.

'We hit a gap in the research, and have rather quickly become internationally renowned,' says Professor Sebba. Under her direction, the team have focused their efforts on improving the current evidence base in children's social care, which has traditionally been underfunded and lacking in rigorous evaluation. 'It certainly hasn't been like genome research or climate change work, where there's a history of secondary data analysis, big data sets and longitudinal studies,' she stresses.

Professor Sebba wasn't the only one who noticed a disparity between sectors. In 2016, the UK government unveiled £300 million plans for a new social work body to improve standards in the profession. Funding is also being made available for a new What Works Centre – an initiative aimed at providing robust, comprehensive evidence to guide decision-making in children's social care.

'I think the fact that there is enough interest to commission a What Works Centre shows you that your average policy-maker or practitioner who wants evidence just doesn't know where to get it,' says Professor Sebba. Thankfully though, things are beginning to change. 'There's a lot going on at the moment,' she continues, 'and there are lots of opportunities for us to get our research taken more seriously.'

Later this year, the Rees Centre will embark upon a five-year research project focused on attachment awareness – an important concept in the care system, which draws



upon the theory that a strong emotional and physical attachment to at least one primary caregiver is critical to a child's personal development. Supported by a gift of £750,000 from service retailer Timpson Ltd, the programme will target 300 schools, providing the type of robust national evaluation that, until now, has not been possible.

'It involves changing the whole culture of the school,' explains Professor Sebba, 'and helping staff to understand that they need to look behind the behaviour of the child to recognise what's happening, not just take it at face value.' The programme, she hopes, will result in better behaviour and less exclusion, 'and in turn that should translate into better achievement for those children.'

For Professor Sebba, the impact of the centre's research is of paramount importance. She's confident that, thanks to the Timpson Attachment Programme and other initiatives, the Rees Centre can help to initiate a step-change – not only in the quality and extent of the evidence base, but also the use of this evidence. 'Ultimately,' she says, 'the acid test is: is it making a difference to young people in care? That has to be the most important thing. That's really where my heart lies.'

→ Read more on:
www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/fostering

● ●
*Believing that our work
will have an impact
on what young people
in care want and need
is where the greatest
satisfaction lies.*

Professor Judy Sebba

INTERGROWTH-21st

An Oxford-led project aims to improve health outcomes for preterm babies worldwide.

Compared to term babies, those born small and/or prematurely are at greater risk of dying in the first few weeks of life and of developing health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease in adulthood. Tackling these problems on a global scale requires a reliable way of identifying impaired growth in the womb that manifests as small size for gestational age at birth. Doing so has not been possible until recently because of the lack of charts describing optimal growth that apply to all populations in the world.

INTERGROWTH-21st is a global, multidisciplinary project studying human growth and development from early pregnancy to two years of age. The programme is co-led by José Villar, Professor of Perinatal Medicine, and Stephen Kennedy, Professor of Reproductive Medicine, both from the University's Nuffield Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, based at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford.

The project adopted the same conceptual approach and design as the 2006 World Health Organization (WHO) study that produced international standards for term babies describing optimal growth from 0-5 years of age – the WHO Child Growth Standards. Despite the widespread acceptance and use of the WHO Child Growth Standards around the world, there is still a commonly held belief that certain populations, particularly in low and middle income countries, have small babies because of their genes, and not because they are exposed to adverse influences such as poor maternal nutrition and infection.

Professor Villar states, 'Our hypothesis was that healthy, well-nourished women, free of disease, living in a clean environment and receiving good antenatal care would have babies that grow similarly inside the womb and achieve a similar size at birth. If this proved true, then it would be possible to produce a single set of international standards to assess the growth of all babies. Those babies not growing 'healthily' could then be reliably identified resulting in better and more targeted health care.'

The INTERGROWTH-21st Consortium collected data from mothers and their babies in Brazil, China, India, Italy, Kenya, Oman, the UK and the USA, and clearly

demonstrated that healthy mothers do have healthy babies that grow similarly inside the womb and achieve a similar size at birth irrespective of their ethnicity. The resulting international standards perfectly match the existing WHO Child Growth Standards and now enable growth and development to be monitored in a consistent manner from early pregnancy to five years of age. To date, these standards have been downloaded in total over 60,000 times across virtually every country in the world.

The INTERGROWTH-21st Newborn Size Standards proved invaluable during the recent Zika virus epidemic. Once adopted by WHO, the standards helped to improve screening for microcephaly so that the Brazilian authorities could focus their attention on those babies most likely to have been affected by the virus.

A donation of \$2.8 million from the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, a Swiss-based foundation that focuses on promoting and supporting breastfeeding and the use of human milk with the aim of granting every child an optimal start in life, is now helping the INTERGROWTH-21st Consortium to implement the international Preterm Postnatal Growth Standards. These standards describe optimal postnatal growth for babies born prematurely, provided they are breast fed.

Global adoption of the INTERGROWTH-21st Preterm Postnatal Growth Standards and the evidence-based feeding protocol for preterm infants is vital for promoting the use of human milk in neonatal units and breastfeeding clinics around the world so as to improve the survival and health of preterm infants. Professor Villar comments: 'Preterm babies that are predominantly breast fed grow well, which substantially increases their chances of normal brain and motor development.'

● ●
*Fetal growth is a crucial
period of development – the
basics that will map the rest
of your life.*

Professor José Villar



Left: Professor José Villar, right: Professor Stephen Kennedy

‘In some parts of the world, however, babies are getting fatter due to poor nutrition’, Professor Kennedy states. ‘Breast milk is the key to ensuring that infants develop healthily and maintain adequate (rather than excessive) growth, thereby ensuring that obesity early in life is avoided.’

As part of its work on nutrition, the INTERGROWTH-21st Consortium is evaluating newborn body composition, e.g. the amount of fat present in the body, in addition to body size so as to understand better the value of

breastfeeding for healthy growth and development. Professors Villar and Kennedy hope that the work will facilitate a global project focused on tackling obesity from infancy.

In summary, the INTERGROWTH-21st Project is already improving health outcomes for millions of children around the world, and raising international awareness about the need to identify, from early pregnancy onwards, those babies that are at most risk of poor health.

A spotlight on Chinese art

The Ashmolean's position as a world-leading centre for Chinese art has been made possible with the help of philanthropy. Donor support is ensuring that these incredible works will continue to be used and enjoyed by scholars and visitors for years to come.

The Ashmolean Museum's Chinese collection is substantial. 'It's approaching 10,000 pieces,' explains Shelagh Vainker, Associate Professor and Curator of Chinese Art. The collection includes ceramics, jades, bronzes, paintings, decorative arts, textiles and lacquers, and ranges in date from the Neolithic period through to the 21st century. 'The modern paintings are some of the most special items we have though,' she adds.

The Ashmolean started collecting modern Chinese paintings in the 1950s, 'at a time when nobody else was,' says Professor Vainker. Mindful of the high prices and thriving forgery market associated with earlier works, the museum's then head of department opted instead to acquire contemporary 'literati' paintings – works in the Chinese ink-painting tradition, produced by artists alive in the mid-20th century.

This was the start of one of the most exquisite collections of modern Chinese paintings in the world, strengthened over the course of half a century by further curatorial purchases, as well as numerous gifts and bequests. 'The core of the collection was very good and as a result of that, collectors have been pleased to place their modern Chinese paintings here,' explains Professor Vainker. 'There's been a slow momentum over the years, but it was Michael Sullivan who really moved the collection to a new level.'

Professor Michael Sullivan (1916–2013) was a world authority on modern Chinese art and an Emeritus Fellow



of St Catherine's College. Together with his wife, Khoan, he amassed one of the greatest private collections of modern and contemporary Chinese art in the world. He became a substantial, generous supporter of the museum during his lifetime, funding acquisitions, scholarships, research and exhibitions – 'just as long as they were linked to Chinese painting,' says Professor Vainker.

Following his death, Professor Sullivan left more than 400 works of art to the museum, along with his research papers, his archive of correspondence with Chinese artists, and a seven-figure endowment fund. As a consequence, his generosity will forever underpin work to curate, research, display and teach Chinese art at Oxford.

'Our collection was always prominent, but now it is one of the most important in the West,' says Professor Vainker, who holds the only established teaching post dedicated to Chinese art at Oxford. Handling sessions and special viewings give students unique access to the collections for their research. 'I don't know of anywhere else in the UK that offers that for Chinese art. It's a fantastic opportunity,' she notes.

In addition to serving as a scholarly resource for those at Oxford, the museum's Chinese art collection also attracts



From left to right: Felicitas von Droste, Professor Shelagh Vainker and Dr Yan Liu

● ●
*I feel privileged to have
access to these incredible
collections in my everyday
curatorial work.*

Dr Yan Liu

academics from across the world. Dr Yan Liu, Christensen Fellow in Chinese Painting at the Ashmolean, believes that widening accessibility to scholars working in the field has been ‘absolutely vital’ in helping to deepen knowledge and understanding of Chinese art internationally.

As an early-career academic, Dr Liu plays a central role in drawing together expertise in Chinese art. Her current research project explores the identity formation and expression of Chinese immigrant artists in the West, and will culminate in an exhibition featuring new works by contemporary painter Qu Leilei (b 1951) in November

2017. ‘I am very lucky to work on Professor Michael Sullivan’s legacy. It is my responsibility to introduce Chinese art to a wider audience,’ she says.

This ‘opening up’ of the Chinese art collection has been further boosted by the appointment of a Chinese Paintings Programme Co-ordinator, a post made possible through donor support. Felicitas von Droste works in collaboration with her colleagues to organise conferences, study days and artists’ visits, as well as tours, talks and family days for the general public. ‘It’s really important to get people coming in who don’t know about Chinese art,’ stresses Felicitas. ‘When we talk with them about the paintings, we inevitably end up talking about things beyond the art, about Chinese culture in general. It’s wonderful, and I’m delighted to be a part of it.’

Dr Yan Liu’s research is supported by the Christensen Fund. The Ashmolean’s Chinese collections have also received generous support from the Hon Mr Justice Anselmo Trinidad Reyes, Mr Whang Shang Ying and the Fang family.

→ Read more on:

www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/chinese-art

News in brief

Giving made easier for Swiss donors

Supporters of Oxford University in Switzerland can now make tax-efficient donations to the University and its colleges through a newly established independent Swiss association.

Swiss Friends of Oxford University (SFOU) allows alumni, friends and organisations in Switzerland to give financial support for key projects, including academic posts, scholarships, research programmes and capital projects, in a tax-efficient way. The association will also provide financial support for Swiss resident students through a scholarship fund, and will organise events for its members.

SFOU President, Howard Rosen CBE, is the driving force behind the association. He says: 'Not only are donations from Swiss residents now tax deductible, but legacies are also exempt from any applicable cantonal gifts tax. We're confident this will increase support for Oxford and its world-class education and research, and look forward to welcoming lots of members.'

→ For further information:
www.oxfordfriends.ch
info@oxfordfriends.ch



Driving forward digitisation at the Bodleian

The Bodleian Library has been actively pursuing a programme of digitisation for over 30 years, in a concerted effort to open up its vast and extraordinary collections to users all around the world. By making its precious resources freely available in this way, the library is not only helping to transform teaching, research and conservation, but is also providing huge opportunities for access to the library's non-scholarly readers.

Donors have long played a critical role in driving forward digitisation projects at the library. Generous funding from the Polonsky Foundation, for example, has made possible a collaborative initiative with the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Due for completion later this year, the Polonsky Project will make more than 1.5 million pages from the two collections available in digital format.

The Bodleian is also undertaking two pioneering projects that seek to manage the growth of today's digital cultural heritage. Thanks to philanthropic support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the library is now able to offer paid traineeships that will provide graduates with the skills required to become digital archivists, and meet this challenge head on.

'Donors are absolutely critical in helping us to build on earlier support,' says Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian. 'So much of our collections were given to us or acquired with funds that were gifted, and the ability to utilise that investment in our great library in a different way, for a new generation, is of fundamental importance for our work, for the University, and for society at large.'

→ Read more on:
www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/digitisation





Support for clubfoot

More than 30,000 children in Africa are born with clubfoot each year. Without treatment, the condition becomes a painful and severely disabling deformity. However, in up to 95% of cases, clubfoot can be treated successfully if initiated early.

Professor Chris Lavy, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences, led a crowdfunding campaign to expand training and treatment of clubfoot in Africa that was launched last year. £83,000 was raised to support the roll out of three courses, including basic and advanced clubfoot treatment provider training courses, and a clubfoot 'train the trainer' course.

The first 'train the trainer' course supported by donors to this campaign took place in September 2017. People from a number of clubfoot organisations working in the region also attended to help strengthen links towards scaling-up training in the region using the new resources.

Professor Lavy said: 'We are very excited by the opportunity to completely change the lives of children and families by training many more healthcare providers to treat more children with clubfoot. We aim to give every child with clubfoot the opportunity to have treatment. We are immensely grateful to everyone who has supported this project including CURE Clubfoot and members of Global Clubfoot Initiative.'

Securing the future of rowing

A £12.6 million gift from a group of anonymous donors is set to transform rowing at Oxford. This support, comprising a gift of £10.6 million and an additional £2 million in matched funding, is a major step toward the creation of a £20 million endowment for the sport across all the teams.

Named in honour of former Oxford rower and coach Dan Topolski, who passed away in February 2015, the Topolski Fund will underpin Oxford rowing for both the men's and women's teams as well as the lightweight teams, putting them all on an equal footing.

Once the £20 million target is met, the Topolski Fund will be sufficient to fund all four of the University's rowing clubs in perpetuity, enabling them to have the best possible coaching and training programmes without being dependent on external funding.

The endowment will be particularly significant for the lightweight teams who currently receive nothing through sponsorship. Colin Smith, former president of the Oxford University Boat Club, Olympic silver medallist and Oxford Blue, says: 'Those people who want to row will be able to do so without significant financial constraint, regardless of income.'

Oxford's tradition of academic excellence has historically gone hand-in-hand with a reputation for sporting achievement, and rowing is no exception. Since the first Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge in 1829, rowing has grown to become one of the University's biggest and most successful sports. It has produced no fewer than 120 Olympians and 78 medallists.



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