



THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES



ANNUAL REVIEW | 2014-15



The humanities have always been a central part of Oxford's academic and creative life. I had no doubt when I helped to launch TORCH that it was an idea whose time has come.

*Professor Andrew Hamilton,
Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford*



ABOUT TORCH

Launched in May 2013, TORCH stimulates, supports and promotes research activity of the very highest quality that transcends disciplinary and institutional boundaries and engages with wider audiences.



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CONTENTS

Welcome	4–5
Moments	6–7
Networks	8–15
Programmes	16–21
Early Career	22–25
Knowledge Exchange	26–29
Book at Lunchtime	30
Engaging with Museums and Galleries	31
Annual Headline Series	32–35
Humanitas	36–37
Giving to TORCH	38
Finance Report	39

WELCOME

Professor Andrew Hamilton Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford

The humanities have always been a central part of Oxford's academic and creative life. I had no doubt when I helped to launch TORCH that it was an idea whose time has come, and I have looked with pleasure at the progress that has been made over the past two years. TORCH has been embraced wholeheartedly by the academic community in Oxford, and this has helped it to develop into a research centre with an impressive resumé of projects and with a growing international reach.

I am delighted to see that TORCH is grappling with many of the big questions that Oxford should be talking about and that it has been able to bring the humanities' voice into the conversation. TORCH offers an invaluable platform for the humanities to engage with the sciences, business, the creative industries and the general public. It has been particularly invigorating to see TORCH collaborate with the sciences through its 'Humanities and Science' series this year. Although my time as Vice-Chancellor is coming to an end, I will look forward to observing TORCH's progress from across the Atlantic, as I am certain that there are many exciting developments yet to come.

Professor Shearer West, Head of the Humanities Division, University of Oxford

Now into its second year, TORCH continues to be a nucleus of intellectual energy for the humanities and a place to develop new ideas and forge often unexpected collaborations both within and beyond the academy. At heart, TORCH exists to allow humanities researchers from different fields to work together. It supports over 20 networks, 9 major research programmes, involving over 300 researchers. This year alone, TORCH supported more than 350 events, with audiences of over 13,000 people. It has hosted a range of interdisciplinary projects, collaborating with all 9 humanities faculties, with departments in the sciences and with cultural organisations across Oxford.

Above all, TORCH brings together researchers of all career stages, and from a range of disciplines, to share ideas, experiment and pose new research questions. I am delighted that TORCH will be part of 'Being Human', the UK's first festival for the humanities, this year and will participate in the national celebration of the arts. TORCH has invigorated the humanities at Oxford and continues to showcase the humanities on a global stage.



Professor Andrew Hamilton,



Professor Shearer West

**Professor Chris Wickham,
Chichele Professor of Medieval History,
University of Oxford**

I have now (from September 2015) taken over from Shearer West as Head of Humanities, but in this last year I have been Associate Head for Research, and so I have seen TORCH's activities close up. It has been an immensely exciting experience; the buzz in TORCH is permanent, and its events are regularly oversubscribed.

My personal involvement in the Medieval Studies programme in TORCH has shown me in terms of my own research how important its connectivity can be, from major conferences to graduate reading groups. More widely, it has already shown what an appetite there is for interdisciplinary activity inside humanities (this is particularly important for sectors which do not have a fixed disciplinary home, such as environmental humanities, women and humanities, race and resistance, or dance), and in connecting humanities to other divisions inside Oxford. It connects to the wider world as well, through public engagement, partnership with cultural and private organisations, and the Knowledge Exchange Fellowships, which extend those partnerships further.

TORCH is becoming crucial for its support for early career research and training. But, above all, it is a place where all of us can experiment and take risks. We need to do risky things, or else we will never move outside the research tramlines of the past. Long may TORCH do that!



Professor Chris Wickham

Professor Stephen Tuck, TORCH Director

There have been many highlights this year. I think my own was an event in January held in collaboration with the Mathematical Institute, 'Narrative and Proof'. Over 400 people, not to mention many more watching online, heard Oxford's Professor for the Public Understanding of Science, Marcus du Sautoy, argue that mathematical proof and literary narrative had much more in common than we might think, mathematician Roger Penrose and literary scholar Laura Marcus respond that they had much less in common than du Sautoy might think, and novelist Ben Okri reflect on how storytelling in both disciplines addressed 'the enigma of being human.'

'Narrative and Proof' summed up TORCH's *modus operandi* – the idea came from the speakers, and it brought disciplines (and departments) together in an interesting way, with unexpected results. The event was a fitting opening to the year's headline series, Humanities and Science, which marked an important new stage in TORCH's development.

Behind the headline events is a dizzying range of research projects which started at TORCH, or used TORCH as a place to develop collaborations within or beyond the University. This review can only reflect on some of them, but we hope it gives a sense of what TORCH does, and how to be involved. (And for the busy reader, the 'moments section' on pp 6–7 is the place to scan the highlights of the highlights).

My thanks to the many, many people who have led, participated in and supported research at TORCH this year, and for making it such a fun place to work. My thanks, too, to the TORCH team for running things with style and without fuss, not least for putting together this review.



Professor Stephen Tuck

MOMENTS



Oxford Open Doors

We opened our doors as part of the countywide initiative, inviting people to visit the historic Radcliffe Humanities, which was formerly the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford's first hospital.

'I worked here as a staff nurse and it was lovely to revisit; beautiful building. Thank you!'

ATTENDEE

SEPTEMBER 2014

Narrative and Proof

The opening event of our headline series Humanities and Science brought together writers, mathematicians and literary scholars to consider how narrative shapes the sciences as well as the arts.

'Breakthroughs come very often from asking new questions. By creating an environment for the humanities and the sciences to come together there is the hope that each might offer the other new ways to look at their subject.'

PROFESSOR MARCUS DU SAUTOY, CHARLES SIMONYI PROFESSOR FOR THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

JANUARY 2015



International Women's Day

The Women in Humanities programme joined the international celebration by staging a discussion of women's equality in the academy.

'The International Women's Day event was a stimulating and inspiring occasion. It benefited from having so many different perspectives represented on the panel, and the discussion afterwards took us in surprising and fruitful directions. I liked the tone of the discussion: stimulating but very tolerant in tone. On a personal level, it opened my eyes to the specific challenges and difficulties that can arise for women – academics, other university staff and students – within the world of higher education. I look forward to learning more.'

MELISSA BENN, JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR OF *WHAT SHOULD WE TELL OUR DAUGHTERS?*

MARCH 2015



Leviathan and the Air Pump

Hosted by the Enlightenment programme, the event revisited the controversial dispute between Robert Boyle and Thomas Hobbes over the possibility of a vacuum.

'The humanities and the sciences need to communicate. An obvious channel is the history of science. Scientists, pursuing an ever-developing discipline, necessarily focus on the present; historians, attending to the past, remind us how we reached our present – often through conflicts, controversies, and unexpectedly roundabout routes.'

PROFESSOR RITCHIE ROBERTSON, TAYLOR PROFESSOR OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

MAY 2015



Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop

We hosted the leading African diaspora scholarly organisation for their annual creative writing workshop.

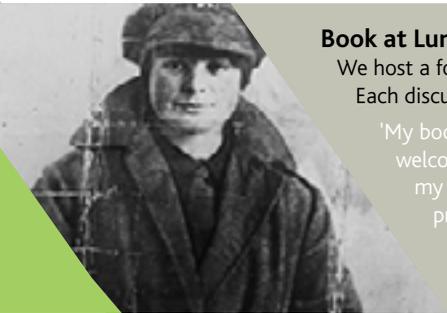
'Oxford and TORCH provided more than a building, it offered a space that was both historically and intellectually rich, one that sparked continual inquiry and reflection. If the imagination must be able to move unhindered in order to reach its full potential, then for one glorious week, through an examination of their writing and its connection to complicated intersections in history, the members of the workshop were given the opportunity to leap, again and again, towards increasingly expansive thought. As a writer and an instructor, it was a rewarding week that could not have happened anywhere else.'

MAAZA MENGISTE, WRITER AND WORKSHOP LEADER

JULY 2015



Some of our highlights from 2014-15



Book at Lunchtime discussion of *Common People: The History of an English Family* by Alison Light

We host a fortnightly series of bite-size discussions exploring new books by humanities scholars at Oxford. Each discussion starts with comments from three scholars in different fields.

'My book is a bit of a mongrel – part social history, part memoir, part literary meditation – and so I especially welcomed the multidisciplinary TORCH forum. A book is the sum of all its readers and I was left seeing my own work anew – including its limits. More importantly, talking across "disciplines" can show how provisional and fluid they are, how porous knowledge really is, and how much we share in our intellectual endeavours.'

ALISON LIGHT, WRITER, CRITIC AND SCHOLAR

DECEMBER 2014



Is the Playwright Dead?

Our Humanitas Visiting Professor in Drama, David Edgar, participated in a week of events exploring the causes and consequences of the anti-writer trend.

'For me, one message of the week was that – even sitting alone at the computer – playwrights are collaborating with a future production, with the material they're exploring, with the makers of the shows they've seen. It was a very enriching experience for me, and I hope more will come out of these conversations in the future.'

DAVID EDGAR, PLAYWRIGHT

FEBRUARY 2015



That Other Place

An exhibition in collaboration with O3 Gallery exploring Alzheimer's disease from the dual perspectives of sufferer and carer through photography and film.

'That Other Place is a fantastic example of how two very different organisations can share and combine resources to produce an innovative cultural product, which would not have been possible in isolation. It is important for us as a cultural organisation to address the topic of Alzheimer's as I believe we have a social responsibility to explore the 'key questions' and experiences of our generation, and equipped with the universal language of visual imagery, we are in a strong position to do this.'

HELEN STATHAM, DIRECTOR, O3 GALLERY

APRIL 2015

Humanities and Business

A panel discussion in collaboration with the Saïd Business School, which brought together experts from humanities and business backgrounds to consider the reciprocity between the disciplines.

'The humanities are even more relevant to business now than in the past, and the lively discussions demonstrated an impressive level of interest in the humanities from business scholars. Thanks to TORCH, the event sparked a continuing conversation about the challenges and opportunities of bringing the disciplines closer together.'

DR DON DRAKEMAN, BIOTECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEUR AND
AUTHOR OF *WHY WE NEED HUMANITIES*

JUNE 2015



UNIQ Summer School UNIQ is a programme of free residential summer schools for Year 12 students currently studying at UK state schools. We were delighted to host the History courses in 'Gender and Identity' and 'Race and Protest' this year.

'At the beginning of the week the thought of expressing my opinion, raising my hand or writing a paper were all terrifying to me. But by the end of the week I found myself enjoying taking part in surprisingly intense and political debates that came out of nowhere around the dinner table, and being confident of my opinion in discussions. I soon came to appreciate the importance of independent learning and discovered just how much you can learn, both academically and as an individual, in a place like this.'

FFION CLARKE, UNIQ SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENT

JULY 2015



NETWORKS

We currently support 20 research networks, which reach across disciplines to build communities of scholars from a range of career stages to work together on innovative projects. For information about all of our networks please visit www.torch.ox.ac.uk/networks.

Affections and Ethics

Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers

Celebrity Research

Culture and Experience in the Age of the German Reformation

Early Modern Catholicism

Embodiment and Materiality

Enlightenment Correspondences

Fiction and Human Rights

Globalising and Localising the Great War

Global Brazil

The Ibsen Phenomenon

Inheritance and Cooperation

Medieval and Early Modern Mysticism

Oxford Medieval Studies

Orientalophilia: Indic philosophy in post-Romantic thought

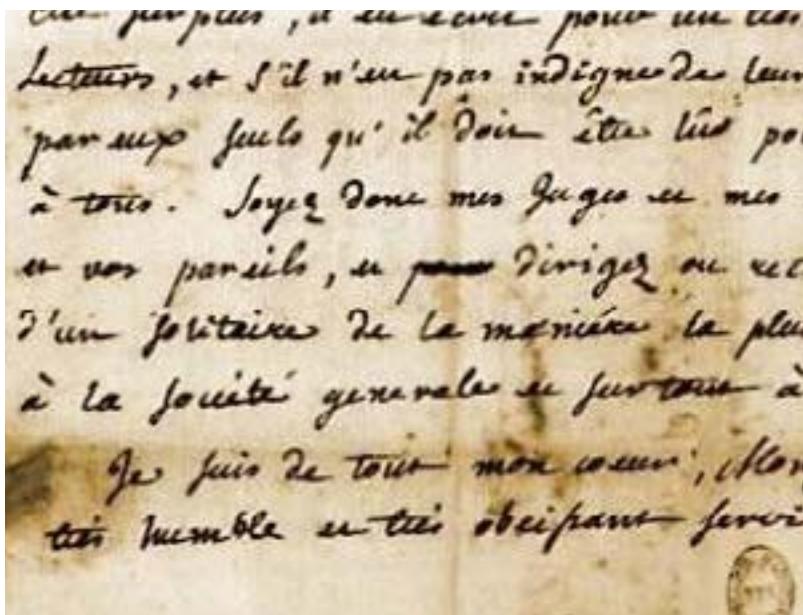
Oxford Phenomenology Network

Rags to Riches: Experiences of Social Mobility since 1800

Romanticism and Eighteenth-Century Studies Oxford

Unconscious Memory

War Crimes Trials and Investigations

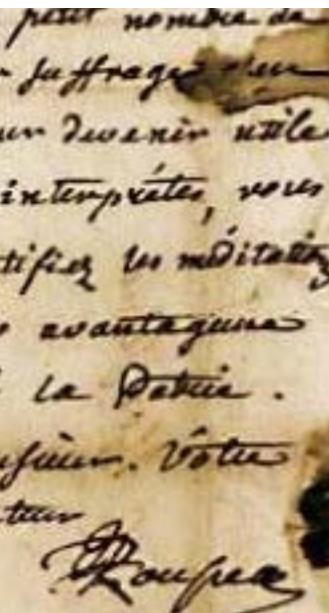


Enlightenment Correspondences

torch.ox.ac.uk/enlightenmentcorr

Letter-writing in the 18th century was the great vehicle of knowledge exchange medium, sociability and communication. The study of epistolarity is now a highly active, diverse and complex academic subject area attracting much new research by historians of culture, ideas and institutions, literature scholars and experts in the digital humanities. The purpose of the network has been to foster exchanges and dialogue about research across the different disciplines of Enlightenment studies that flourish in Oxford.

Throughout the year the network has attracted excellent involvement from graduates in English, History and Modern Languages. Our meetings have taken the form of seminar papers, guest lectures, reading groups, involvement in other conferences and our own international two-day workshop. Interdisciplinarity was a striking feature of the conference. Several colleagues, especially historians, commented that thinking 'out of the box' and using literary methods such as linguistic analysis, analysis of conventions, iconography, added to their toolkit. Conversely, literary scholars interested in questions that might look more purely historical, eg, the mechanics of the post, derived benefit from the comments of historians. On the digital humanities side, the event provided an opportunity to launch the pilot of



the Digital Database of the Correspondence of Catherine the Great (as supported by a British Academy/Leverhulme Grant and the John Fell Fund). The Russian ruler's correspondence with the great and good (and not so good) must be one of the greatest products of the age.

For 2015–16 we look forward to an exciting programme of speakers and topics. Plans also include a collective bibliography of key scholarship on epistolarity and Enlightenment across the sub-disciplines, and a project to compile an anthology of great letters selected and annotated by members of the network.

Professor Andrew Kahn and Dr Kelsey Rubin-Detlev

Global Brazil

torch.ox.ac.uk/globalbrazil

Brazil has long been a flash point for conversations of global scope and import. The world's fifth-largest country by both population and area, Brazil stands at the centre of critical discussions on indigenous politics, income inequality, migration, race, violence, poverty, social movements, the globalisation of culture and sport,

experimental art, television programme syndication, political ecology, the organ trade, public health policy and much more. A core objective of the Global Brazil network will be to both take heed of these discussions and, indeed, to make a vital contribution to them.

Our network's theme – 'Global Brazil' – is meant to call attention to the extensity of Brazilian economics, politics, culture and, increasingly – with the recent emergence of large diasporic communities in major cities all over the world – the Brazilian population itself. Brazil quite clearly occupies a crucial global economic and geopolitical position; it is a leading force in progressive politics; its cultural forms are among the most consumed in the world; it has played a leading role in the development of global forms of experimental literature and art; and it has been globally significant as both a destination point for immigrants from all over the world and a source of emigrants to a vast number of global cities. Clearly, our proposed focus on Brazilian globality has a resonance of a timely and important sort.

This year we brought together colleagues from the Latin American Centre, Anthropology, International Development, Theology, Linguistics, Sociology, Geography

NETWORKS *CONTINUED*

and the Environment, Biomedical Sciences, Music and Modern Languages. Activities included a symposium entitled 'Translating Brazil: Words and Music', papers by guest speakers from around the globe, and readings from celebrated Brazilian writers Daniel Munduruku and Conceição Evaristo. We were pleased to work with a wide range of collaborators, and to participate in the annual Brazil Week and the 'Debating Brazilian Development' seminar series held at Queen Elizabeth House. We look forward to organising an expanded series of events during the 2015-16 academic year, including a high-profile international conference in June 2016, just prior to the Summer Olympics that will be held in Rio de Janeiro.

Professor Jason Stanyek and Dr Claire Williams

Globalising and Localising the Great War

torch.ox.ac.uk/greatwar

Globalising and Localising the Great War (GLGW) commemorates the centenary of one of the defining moments in modern history – the First World War. GLGW's objective is to facilitate local, national, international and interdisciplinary dialogue between scholars whose research focuses on the Great War and to produce challenging new research and fresh insights.

At the heart of GLGW is the new generation of scholars – their research will determine the direction of future analysis of the First World War and its ongoing legacy. In Hilary term 2015 graduate researchers organised a series of interdisciplinary seminars, which culminated in the GLGW Graduate Conference on 20 March. Taking advantage of the network of researchers that GLGW encompasses – from History, English, Modern Languages, Law, Politics, Economics and Theology – graduates drew together conference participants from a range of disciplines and countries. Researchers discussed subjects as diverse as the Royal Air Force, war cemeteries, railways, British West African industry, Shakespeare, Maltese propaganda, poetry, Japanese exile, rural Sicily

and the Portuguese empire in Africa. While Oxford was well represented, keynote speakers and delegates were welcomed from as far afield as Australia, Nigeria and USA, as well France, Ireland, Portugal and the rest of the UK.

The networks and contacts forged during this first conference will be built on during GLGW's second year. For 2015–6, events will include masterclasses and seminars with academics from Oxford, the UK, Ireland and France, and the second GLGW graduate conference is scheduled for the end of March 2016. The first conference confirmed the importance of academic exchange across disciplines and between researchers. It also emphasised the need for both local and global research into the conflict. A joint Oxford – Sorbonne graduate workshop will bring together early career researchers from around the world. The network will also explore local connections, with masterclasses organised jointly with Oxford Brookes University on subjects including publishing, media and public history within Oxfordshire. By exploring an even wider range of disciplines, the planned GLGW events will demonstrate how the First World War continues to impact on contemporary society.

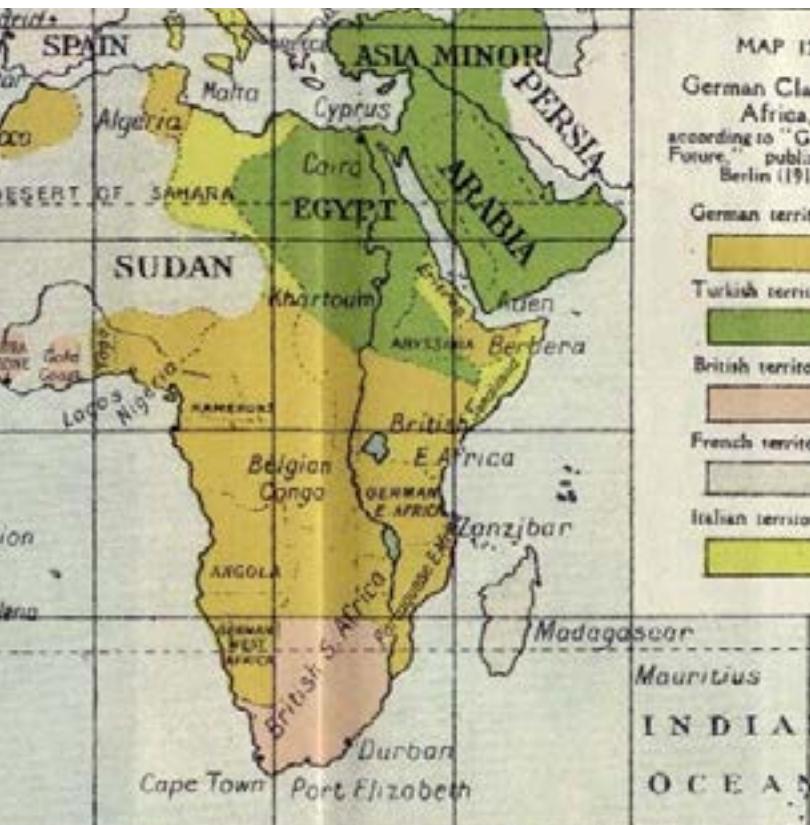
Dr Jeanette Atkinson and Aoife O'Gorman

Inheritance and Cooperation

torch.ox.ac.uk/inheritanceandcooperation

This network has brought together students and researchers at all levels from departments including Philosophy, Zoology, Psychology and Anthropology. We have been meeting all year for a weekly reading group and seminar series, discussing papers and listening to invited guests speak on topics that together have laid the foundations for a cutting-edge investigation within the philosophy of biology.

Significant progress has been made within recent literature on what is being called 'extended inheritance',



questions like 'Do we need to supplement genes with other sources of heritability in order to make sense of selection on insect colonies?' (Helanterä); 'Can we achieve an expanded definition of "inheritance" by building on that of "transmission of information" (Merlin); and 'Do we have a theory of cultural selection that enables us to explain cooperation amongst humans?' (Richerson).

which looks at non-genetic causes of similarity across generations of organisms, via mechanisms such as culture and epigenetics. We sought to capitalise on insights gained within this area by applying them specifically to another very live and important area of recent research: the problem of cooperation. So how might non-genetic inheritance prompt us to revise the evolutionary dynamical models that have been, up to now, based solely on genetic inheritance? And how might our understanding of that most tantalising of puzzles, the evolution of altruism, be affected? Our approach took on extra practical significance because much of our reading was directed at understanding cooperation especially between humans.

The year's events culminated in a two-day conference here in Oxford at the end of June. 'Inheritance and cooperation' was an unusually diverse meeting, gathering researchers from all corners of the globe (Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter, France, Switzerland, Finland, California and even Australia), from all hierarchical levels (from undergraduate to emeritus) and from at least five disciplines (Philosophy, Biology, Computer Science, Psychology and Anthropology). The meeting explored

Graduate students doing their first-ever public speaking gave clear and incisive commentaries to the main talks. Prestigious and eloquent speakers were lively and gracious when the enthusiastic and sometimes unrelenting debate flowed in after their talks. And break times were full of silo-busting chatter: Are philosophers more argumentative than biologists? Why are so many anthropologists hostile to evolutionary approaches? Do models beat informal arguments every time?

There were some surprising and invigorating outcomes of our discussions. We all agreed that particular key terms in biology are vulnerably inter-defined: *inheritance, fitness, organism, reproduction*. There is a need to find some stable fixed point in this circle but finding one will not be easy. We agreed that inheritance systems should be organised in terms of their capacity to give rise to processes of evolution by natural selection but we struggled to agree on what processes count. We agreed that we need to replace the genetic definition of heritability with a more extended notion but will need much more work before we can say just how extended.

Dr Ellen Clarke

NETWORKS *CONTINUED*

Medieval and Early Modern Mysticism

torch.ox.ac.uk/memm

Mysticism, understood as the immediate contact and, indeed, union of the soul (psyche) with the divine or higher reality in this life, has achieved a new prominence in humanities research in recent years. Scholarship in diverse disciplinary fields, including history, literature, languages, philosophy and theology, has edited, analysed and contextualised an array of new sources, authors and themes.

The core aim of this research network is to draw on the different expertise on mysticism that is scattered throughout several faculties of the University of Oxford. Students of Theology, Literature, History and Philosophy read Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich or Teresa of Avila, but rarely use the same secondary scholarship or borrow different methodologies from other disciplines. The Theology and Religion curriculum has its own course of 'Mysticism', English Faculty presents 'English Mystics' and German Literature studies 'Mystical Medieval writings'. Oriental Studies develop their own authors and scholarship, oftentimes inaccessible to those who do not have access to original languages. Classicists, historians and philosophers may use some of those texts to illustrate wider notions. Nonetheless, they are rarely seen together.

In the initial phase of the project a series of seminars examined how several mystical authors, themes and practices are historicised, contextualised and put in dialogue with other disciplines (such as neuroscience); how the material aspect of the text adds a new dimension to both our and the mystic's understanding of, and their coping with, mystical experiences; how canonical mystical authors, like Teresa of Avila, are better understood through comparative case studies of other lesser-known mystics; and how themes such as performance and agency can contribute to clarifying mystical experience. In June 2015 we were awarded an Astor Visiting Professorship to host Harvard Professor

Amy Hollywood for a week of public lectures exploring 'The True, The Real and the Mystical'. On 1 June Professor Hollywood gave a lecture on 'Reading Derrida Reading', which was followed by a fantastic performance of 'Last Train to Oxford', a dramatised adaption of John Schad's

documentary novel *Someone Called Derrida*. We look forward to continuing the network in 2015–16, with planned activities including a reading group on Vernacular Theology, an interdisciplinary conference celebrating the anniversary of Julian of Norwich's death in collaboration with St Benet's, and a conference on 'Dionysus Areopagite' in collaboration with Patristic Studies.

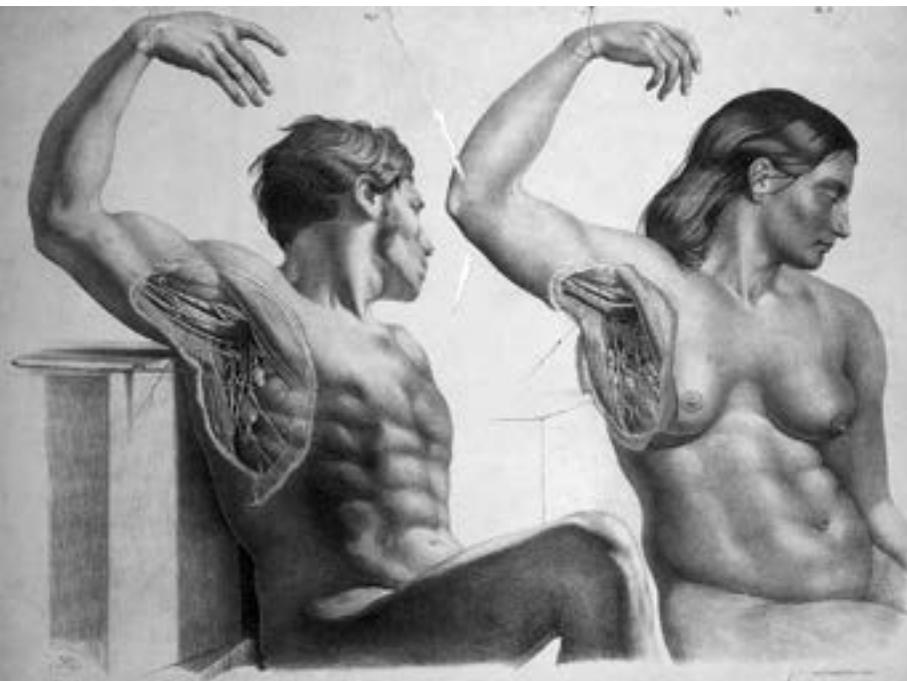
Dr Joana Serrado and Dr Johannes Depnering

Oxford Phenomenology

torch.ox.ac.uk/phenomenology

This year, as well as continuing our successful interdisciplinary seminar series (with speakers from Anthropology, English Literature, History of Art, Neuroscience and Philosophy), we held our inaugural conference: 'Phenomenology and Health: An Interdisciplinary Symposium', 27–28 March 2015. We secured Wellcome ISSF funding to match our TORCH Network Grant and an additional small grant from the Wellcome Trust, enabling us to keep conference fees low, offer three fee-waived places for graduate students, film the conference, and host two expert keynote speakers: Professor Havi Carel (University of Bristol) and Dr Gillian Thomson (University of Central Lancashire). The symposium brought together 100 international scholars and practitioners working at the intersection





Yacht at night, 1860, by J.M.W. Turner

between phenomenology and health, covering a diverse range of fields including general practice, psychology, psychotherapy, physiotherapy, dance therapy, sociology, anthropology, literary studies and philosophy. Over the two days we explored and assessed the benefits of phenomenological theories of embodiment, subjectivity, and social interaction for health-related research and practice.

The symposium sparked several new research collaborations. Through connections made during the event, Dr Kori Novak – a US-based early career researcher who uses phenomenology to understand end of life care in prisons – has started a new international project. Kori writes: 'Directly due to the conference, I am now preparing to do some partnered research with colleagues at the University of Cardiff and the University of Vienna. The conference has rocketed my research and work from a primarily domestic sphere to international work.' During the roundtable discussion on the final day of the conference, Professor Fredrik Svenaeus (Södertörn University) noted that, although he has been working on phenomenology and health for over ten years, this was the first major conference dedicated to the topic. This, for him, signalled that 'phenomenology and health' is now a field in its own right.

Dr Cleo Hanaway-Oakley

Rags to Riches

torch.ox.ac.uk/socialstatus

At a time of increasing inequality in British society, social mobility is a key theme in contemporary policy discourse. There has recently been a resurgence in research on social mobility; both inside and outside its traditional intellectual home of sociology. In June the Rags to Riches network held a workshop on 'Rethinking social mobility' which explored this new wave of research. The day was primarily organised by Eve Worth and Helena Mills, with help from Bethany White, all DPhil students in History. We structured the workshop into thematic yet interdisciplinary panels each with three short papers of just ten minutes. Rather than a keynote speaker, we began with a roundtable featuring social mobility researchers from Anthropology, History and Sociology to discuss the provocative question: 'Is social mobility a myth?' The shape of the day successfully fostered cross-disciplinary discussion and participation rather than passive attendance.

The main aim of our network is to complicate understandings of social mobility especially in historical and experiential terms and we focused on these themes at the workshop. Research on 19th-century Europe by Christina de Bellaigue and Will Clement highlighted that in order to fully comprehend social mobility as a concept we must focus more on social *immobility*

NETWORKS *CONTINUED*

and strategies employed by those in power to contain mobility. Papers on experiences of social mobility by Eve Worth and Shirin Shahrokni raised questions about the spatial and temporal aspects of social mobility and whether it's a familial or individual process. Throughout the day we kept returning to these issues of definition and whether social mobility should be straightforwardly considered a social good. We hope to reflect further on these questions over next academic year with the new members of the network that we recruited through the workshop. A special issue of the *British Journal of Sociology* combining papers from our workshop with a selection from a recent conference on social mobility organised by the Centre of Socio-Cultural Research at the University of Manchester is in preparation.

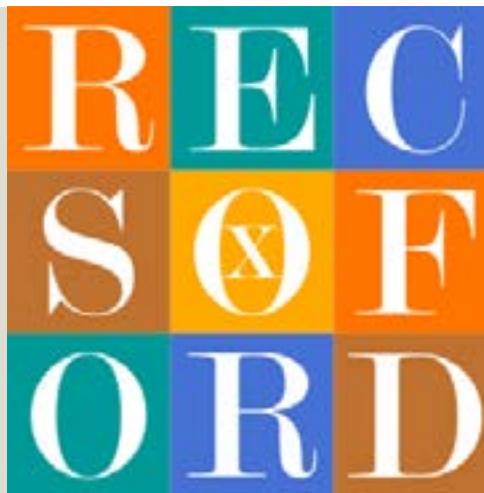
Professor Christina de Bellaigue

Romanticism and Eighteenth-Century Studies Oxford

torch.ox.ac.uk/recso

Romanticism and Eighteenth-Century Studies Oxford (RECSO) is a graduate-led initiative for scholars across the Humanities Division. Our aim is to provide a platform for graduates and academics from various disciplines to discuss and share their research into the long 18th-century. It also facilitates the development of projects, workshops and larger events, as well as providing a physical meeting space for RECSO's growing body of members.

In Hilary term 2015 RECSO held a fortnightly workshop series entitled '90 Seconds, 5 Questions'. We invited graduate students and early career researchers to present their research in 90 seconds before answering five prepared questions about the nature and relevance of their project, their chosen methodology and research materials. The workshop gave our speakers the opportunity to discuss their research in an engaging and unusual format, and to reflect on their approaches and research methods. This was supported by input from the interdisciplinary audience during the closing



discussions, the benefit of which our speaker Hannah Kinney (DPhil History of Art) has illustrated: 'Fielding questions and getting feedback from specialists of the period, but not necessarily my department, urged me to delineate my project clearly and consider how it fits within and between disciplinary boundaries. I think it is fantastic that RECSO provides such a forum.'

The success of the workshop series prompted us to consider other ways for members of RECSO to present their work. The result of this discussion is the seminar series that we will be running in collaboration with the Ashmolean Museum during Michaelmas term 2015. Four graduate students and early career researchers will lead research seminars using objects, prints and/or drawings from the museum collection as either a springboard for their presentation or as an illustrative case study. This collaborative seminar series will enable members of the University who do not normally work with visual material to engage with the rich holdings of the Ashmolean, and will give those who do an opportunity to experiment with new and innovative ways of presenting their research.

Emily Knight

Unconscious Memory

torch.ox.ac.uk/unconscious

Sitting on the train back to St Petersburg, the day after the fateful ball, Anna Karenina thinks to herself, 'Well, that's all over, and thank God!' Yet when, during



a stop-over Count Vronsky, the man from whom she is fleeing, suddenly comes into view, her reaction reveals something quite different. As Tolstoy describes it, the sight of him was 'exactly what her soul had wished but her reason had feared'. So begins the long tortuous conflict between Anna's conscious thoughts and the inexplicable unconscious processes that underlie them.

Such a gap between what we think and what we know is at the heart of the investigations of the Unconscious Memory Network. Founded in October 2014, this forum brings together the rich and varied representations of unconscious processes in literature with the new science of the unconscious. It explores what it is to remember without awareness and how unconscious memory delimits, defines and transforms the concept of conscious cognition. The aim is to integrate the vast amount of relevant information emerging from cognitive neuroscience on the pivotal role that unconscious memory plays with key concepts in humanities research.

Over our first year we held five neuro-literary seminars on various aspects of the unconscious, each of which hosted a neuroscientist and a literary scholar discussing a single theme. The topics were: What is unconscious memory? How does unconscious memory bear on spatial navigation and scene construction? What is priming and what impact does it have on literary

technique and processes? What is neuropsychology? What are the mechanisms of autobiographical memory and what light do they throw on Proust? Debating these questions from neuroscientific perspectives were Larry Squire (UCSD), Masud Husain (Oxford), Richard Brown (Dalhousie), Gordon Shepherd (Yale) and Mark Solms (Cape Town) and from the literary side were Simon Kemp (Oxford), Michael Burke (Utrecht), Sebastian Groes (Roehampton), Ben Morgan (Oxford) and Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (Oxford). We have seen packed seminars, lively debate and a fruitful exchange of ideas between the scientists, literary critics and other disciplines in attendance. All the seminars are available on our website as podcasts.

We continue energetically into our second year. We set out to generate concrete research agendas for the production of systematic and transdisciplinary knowledge about the unconscious across the divide between the 'two cultures'. Topics that will be discussed include: priming and prejudice; is the unconscious concept or metaphor?; the neuropsychanalytic reader; and the cognitive anthropology of the unconscious. Collaboration and suggestions are warmly welcome.

Dr Sowon S Park



Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation

torch.ox.ac.uk/comparativecriticism

A collaboration between TORCH and St Anne's College Research Centre.

Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT) begins from a simple observation: literature, like the other arts, does not respect national boundaries but circulates across languages and cultures, sometimes also migrating into different media. But the questions that arise are complex and important. If literature is viewed globally, how do we justify the choice of this or that group of texts to study? How do we set about interpreting them and mapping their history? How should we think about translation, a form of writing that is often neglected but which is in fact both fundamental to literary evolution and aesthetically complex in itself? How can we bring an awareness of linguistic and cultural difference into studies of the mind? OCCT draws together academics from the Faculties of English, Medieval and Modern Languages, Oriental Studies, Classics, Art and Music to explore these questions.

We hold an annual conference: this year, it focused on borders. In geography nowadays, borders are understood not so much as lines on the ground as 'bordering practices', complex systems of behaviour and regulation. We wanted to find out if this idea can help explain what happens to literature when it crosses languages and media, and our own behaviour as academics working across the borders of our disciplines. Highlights included the artist Caroline Bergvall presenting work that morphed words into visual forms, and the philosopher Michael Wheeler exploring reasons for thinking that the mind extends beyond the body. The book of the conference, *Minding Borders*, will come out next year in our imprint Transcript which is hosted by the publisher Legenda.

We put on regular seminars: standout sessions have included the distinguished Lebanese writer Hanan Al-Shaykh, with Marina Warner and Claire Gallien, investigating how the Arabian Nights have been reimagined across languages and media; the literary scholar Robin Kirkpatrick and art historian Jas Elsner on the relation between translation and ekphrasis; and American independent publishers Joyelle McSweeney and Johannes Göransson on writing practices that mix poetry and translation. Our postgraduate and early career associates run a lively fortnightly discussion group: this year it has focused mainly on aesthetics across different media. Some members of the group, led by our JRF and co-ordinator Xiaofan Amy Li, set about a collaborative project on 'auto-exoticism', ie the cultural phenomenon in which writers and artists knowingly construct themselves as exotic, rather than being labelled as such by others. This culminated in an excellent day of papers ranging from

PROGRAMMES

Our nine research programmes bring together existing major research groups and individuals working in the same field to collaborate and incubate new ideas.

[Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation](#)

[Dance Scholarship Oxford](#)

[Digital Humanities](#)

[Enlightenment](#)

[Environmental Humanities](#)

[Medical Humanities](#)

[Race and Resistance](#)

[Visual Research](#)

[Women in Humanities](#)

19th-century Brittany to contemporary Japan: they are now being worked up for publication. Another highlight of the year was Oxford Translation Day, a festival of public talks and workshops, held in collaboration with the Oxford – Weidenfeld Translation Prize.

Next year we're launching a research project on 'Prismatic Translation', along with several other initiatives including a new master's course. OCCT's podcasts are on our website www.occt.ox.ac.uk, together with our early-career-led online magazine *Comparative Critical Review*; our Facebook is [CompCritOxford](https://www.facebook.com/CompCritOxford); our Twitter feed @OxfordCCT. Do follow us!

Professor Matthew Reynolds

Dance Scholarship Oxford

torch.ox.ac.uk/dansox

Dance Scholarship Oxford (DANSOX), now in its second year, continues to provide a major forum for dance scholarship, promoting dialogue between prominent academic disciplines and the worlds of dance theory and practice. The programme fills a gap in current activities in Oxford by offering an international exchange of interdisciplinary dance-related research that investigates a wide range of enquiries into all forms of dance and examines the ways in which the role of choreographic practice, which has received limited attention, reveals its essential contribution to innovations across academic fields, theatre and performance. The events have provided a forum for a mixed audience, but has particularly extended graduate awareness of the role of dance in a wide variety of academic subjects including history, music, literature and neuroscience.

In November 2014 Jane Pritchard, Curator of Dance at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), gave a sparkling address on 'Archiving Dance', illustrated by images from the V&A collections of late 19th and early 20th-century dance-related material. Jane showed the challenges of archiving an ephemeral art form before the widespread use of notation and film, the dance historian drawing on an essential 'feel' for what constitutes important information from audience journals, theatre bills and photographs.

Wayne McGregor, Resident Choreographer of the Royal Ballet and Artistic Director of Random Dance, appeared in 'Dance and Neuroscience' at St Hilda's as part of TORCH's Humanities and Science series, in conversation with neuroscientist Dr Phil Barnard, the proceedings skilfully chaired by curator and arts producer Eckhard



Thiemann. McGregor presented an articulate and searching account of his choreographic practice and his collaboration with Barnard and other scientists. He outlined his longstanding exploration of dancers' thinking and decision-making through sustained experiment in the studio, focusing on the implicit, practice-based knowledge that dancers express in their engagement with choreographic forms. He emphasised the collaborative element of the process, and dancers' ability to articulate their embodied knowledge, and acknowledged Barnard's neuroscientific examination of the cognitive functions of the dancer in action as an enabling factor in his artistic development. Filmed illustrations of McGregor's working practice were shown in a travelling exhibition that had been created in partnership with the Wellcome Institute.

Internationally renowned choreographer Kim Brandstrup joined us in May to explore the relationship between choreography and music, with a practical choreographic workshop with two extraordinary dancers from the Royal Ballet: Kristen McNally and Marcelino Sambé. Kim began with a discussion of what lies at the heart of the creative process for him: the identification of, and focus on, the 'object' of the work. His method demonstrated how a series of sustained movements constrained by predetermined periods of time (choreographed in silence) becomes the structuring framework of a dance work. The brilliant McNally and Sambé brought their own experiences of choreographing to the process – hinting at drama and storytelling as the dancers moved in relation to one another. Brandstrup's striking method shows how choreography can be created without recourse to predetermined assumptions about relations between music and movement. The evening finished with a showing of his poignant dance film 'Leda and the

PROGRAMMES *CONTINUED*

Swan', with a voice-over by Fiona Shaw reading the Yeats poem. The evening prompted lengthy discussion leading to plans for a follow-up interaction between Brandstrup and students in the fields of music, film and literature.

To close the year's programme, Professor Mark Franko (Temple University and Middlesex) spoke on 'The Fascist Legs of Serge Lifar: French Ballet under the Occupation'. Franko shared his recent research on Serge Lifar (1905–1986), a dancer who was involved with the Paris Opera Ballet 1928–58, and who became its director, keeping the company afloat during and after World War II. Found guilty of being a private and artistic collaborator in 1946 and suspended from the Opera for a year, Lifar was subsequently reinstated as choreographer and teacher until his retirement in 1958. Franko considers what our responses should be to Lifar's association with the Third Reich and whether his works, created under its ethos, should be performed. Franko concluded that Lifar should be studied as a proponent of neo-classicism, but only in the context of the political implications of his position. A heated discussion followed, involving students and academics from the fields of dance, modern languages, literature and music.

Professor Sue Jones

Digital Humanities

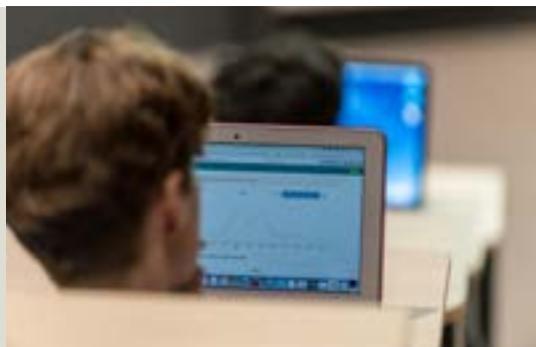
torch.ox.ac.uk/dighum

Oxford has more Digital Humanities activity than any other university, spread across the University – throughout and beyond the Humanities, IT Services, the Bodleian Libraries, the Oxford e-Research Centre, the Oxford Internet Institute and in and around Oxford's museums and collections. This dispersed model is both a strength – Digital Humanities has grown and thrived organically in a range of different disciplines and departments – and a challenge, requiring additional input to ensure that this network communicates and collaborates in the most effective ways possible. To this end, Digital Humanities at Oxford has had a significant boost this year in the form of two new key roles, a Digital Humanities Champion and a dedicated Digital Humanities Network Coordinator, Ruth Kirkham. As Digital Humanities Champion, my role is to raise awareness of the strength and breadth of Digital

Humanities activity at Oxford, to develop cross-University training and research provision in and for Digital Humanities, and to promote and advocate for Digital Humanities within the University and externally.

Our efforts this year have been focused in three areas. Firstly, with the help of colleagues from the Taylor Institution, we have overhauled and relaunched a website to showcase the strength and depth of Digital Humanities research and activity at Oxford. We will follow this shortly with a comprehensive survey to ensure that we have fully captured Digital Humanities activity in the University. Secondly, with the invaluable help and support of Humanities Training Officer Dr John Miles and his colleagues, we have organised a number of dedicated Digital Humanities training events at TORCH for graduate students and early career academics, part of our mission to roll out the kind of skills training offered to visitors through the flagship Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School to Oxford students and staff throughout the academic year. Our forthcoming survey will also be crucial in scoping and understanding training needs in this area. Finally, I have sought to increase research activity in Digital Humanities by providing tailored one-to-one support to those wishing to become or remain active in Digital Humanities at Oxford, as well as giving presentations on opportunities in Digital Humanities to faculties and departments, and reporting on the wealth of activity in this area to the University and beyond.

We are delighted that our efforts over the next year will be focused on the forthcoming TORCH Headline Series 'Humanities and the Digital Age', which will offer us an unrivalled opportunity to showcase, celebrate, challenge, create and inspire through an exciting programme of provocative debates, multidisciplinary panels, and ethical discussions, alongside Apps at Lunchtime, hackathons, Wikipedia edit-a-thons, digital tours, online events and experiences, and focusing TORCH's flagship Books at Lunchtime series to frame discussions around books on the latest digital developments. The series will seek





to forge new collaborations within and beyond Oxford (including with digital humanities leaders from all parts of the globe), and to develop projects with non-university partners.

Dr Kathryn Eccles

Enlightenment

torch.ox.ac.uk/enlightenment

The TORCH Enlightenment Programme/Besterman Centre for the Enlightenment aims to co-ordinate and foster research that builds on the University of Oxford's extraordinarily rich resources for the study of the Enlightenment. Among the many activities sponsored by the programme this year, particular highlights included 'Leviathan and the Air Pump: Thirty Years On', 'Emilie Du Châtelet: Philosopher & Encyclopédiste', and 'The Age of Lightness: Emergences of a Paradigm of the French Eighteenth Century'. All three events were outstanding examples of the programme's success in encouraging interdisciplinary explorations of all aspects of 18th-century intellectual and cultural life; the first two, moreover, offered an Enlightenment perspective on

TORCH's annual theme of Humanities and Science.

Robert Boyle's air-pump experiments in 1659 provoked a lively debate over the possibility of a vacuum. The air-pump became an emblem of the new experimental science that was promoted by the Royal Society. However, the philosopher Thomas Hobbes challenged both the validity of Boyle's experiment and the philosophical foundations of this new approach to science. In their controversial book *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* (1985) Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer took up Hobbes's case, arguing that experimental findings depend for their validity on the scientific culture in which they are made. Historian of science David Wootton and Robert Boyle's biographer Michael Hunter reviewed this controversy and presented a new view of the dispute between Boyle and Hobbes.

In May an interdisciplinary group of scholars and students from several countries met together in Oxford to discuss the life, work and legacy of the famous 18th-century writer and aristocrat Madame Du Châtelet. An area of particular interest was the fascinating afterlife of Châtelet's ideas in the most famous text of the high Enlightenment, the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert. Professor Andrew Janiak said, 'Although scholars have obviously been studying the *Encyclopédie* for generations, it has only recently come to light – based in part on groundbreaking research by Professor Koffi Maglo – that as many as twelve entries in the text involve direct copies from Châtelet. For more than two centuries, when perusing the articles on such topics as hypotheses, gravity and space, scholars have been reading the words of Madame Du Châtelet without knowing it!' This discovery served as a strong reminder that new discoveries can still be made in this growing field.

'The Age of Lightness' conference re-evaluated the stereotype of French lightness, which had emerged as one of the paradigms around or against which the entire century defined itself. It also imposes itself as an historically constructed paradigm, retroactively defining a certain image of the French 18th-century, providing a framework for much historical research nowadays. It brought together scholars from history of science, literature and cultural studies to art history and musicology, and from a broad chronological period spanning the 18th and 19th centuries. Dr Jean-Alexandre Perras said, 'Our discussions and reflections showed that the notion of lightness does not exist without an opposite quality against which it is defined. Lightness

PROGRAMMES *CONTINUED*



as a notion is scarcely neutral: it brings into play the fundamental moral and political issues in 18th-century art, thought, and historiography.'

Professor Ritchie Robertson, Professor Nicholas Cronk and Dr Kelsey Rubin-Detlev

Race and Resistance

torch.ox.ac.uk/raceresist

The network focuses on the activists, artists and intellectuals who worked within and challenged racially oppressive hierarchies in the first half of the 20th-century, and then sought to define and achieve full equality once those formal hierarchies had been overturned. In particular, it explores the ways in which such activists understood their lives and resistance within a global context, and the connections they forged with each other across national and imperial borders. The transnational turn in anti-racist resistance is an important new development in a number of fields, but one that requires collaboration between scholars in order for research to be manageable and effective. Thus this project brings together researchers from a variety of disciplines and geographical areas of expertise. There is potential for Oxford researchers to make a distinctive contribution to scholarship because the struggle for racial equality in Europe – and how it connected with imperial and anti-/post-colonial networks – is the least-studied aspect of this new global story.

The project is timely for two main reasons. Firstly, for the first time, a significant number of postholders and particularly postgraduates in History, Literature, History of Art and Classics are developing research projects that focus on the interconnected story of resistance.

But Oxford has no equivalent of a black studies department (unlike most major universities) as a space for such researchers to work together.

Secondly, somewhat by chance, Oxford has hosted four major events relating to this issue during 2012–14: the Alain Locke conference which was held at the start of this term; an AHRC-funded symposium of the image of the black in Western Art in Trinity 2013; the Callaloo conference (the major conference in black literature and resistance, and its first venture outside the US) in Michaelmas 2013; and the 50th anniversary of Malcolm X's visit to the Oxford Union in Michaelmas 2014. Such events provide a wonderful opportunity to develop a local research programme that will gather international attention.

The main aims of the network have been to educate members on key developments in the various disciplines, to enable postgraduates to develop methodologically sophisticated research frameworks, to seek areas of potential research collaboration with a view to joint publications and external grant applications, to establish a self-sustaining network, to develop research partnerships with other centres in the UK and abroad, and to promote engagement with those involved in the issue of race and equality in education, politics and public life.

In the next academic year we look forward to continuing our weekly seminar series with contributions from graduates, early career scholars, and guest speakers. We will continue to publish the Race and Resistance blog on the TORCH website, which has included film reviews, event reports, and responses to current affairs, as well as working on a new book series, *Race and Resistance Across Borders in the Long Twentieth Century*, published by Peter Lang.

Professor Elleke Boehmer, Professor Stephen Tuck and Dr Justine McConnell

Women in the Humanities

torch.ox.ac.uk/womenandhumanities

Women in the Humanities (WiH) is dedicated to enriching interdisciplinary research into women's lives, identities and representations in the humanities. Since its foundation in 2013 it has become an important part of the University, promoting gender equality and supporting an intellectually compelling series of interdisciplinary events, aimed at exploring how gender and sex play out in history, art, philosophy, music, language and literature. Achieving gender equality is an ongoing concern for policymakers and employers in higher education, despite the fact that policies against discrimination have been in place for 20 to 30 years in some universities. The persistence of barriers to gender equality has been reflected in recent reports about the conditions for female academics in UK university departments. The success of Oxford's interdisciplinary master's programme in Women's Studies has proven that there is momentum behind studies into women's lives, experiences and representation across the humanities. WiH seeks to bring together this exciting research, whilst also offering innovative solutions to gender inequality.

Our flagship event celebrated International Women's Day 2015, and drew more than 150 participants to a discussion on women's equality in the academy. Speakers included the journalist and author Melissa Benn; the journalist, broadcaster and feminist campaigner Caroline Criado-Perez; Trudy Coe, Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit at Oxford; and Imaobong Umoren, an early career researcher at the University. The event prompted discussion on the challenges for women in both the 21st-century academy and in their day-to-day lives more broadly. It received critical attention from across the University and further afield, encouraging participants to reflect on the working practices that allow women to thrive.

In the past academic year WiH has also offered small grants to enable established academics, early career researchers and doctoral students to develop research ideas, write up research and develop teaching on women in the humanities. This included a research grant that enabled Dr Claire O'Mahoney from the Department for Continuing Education to travel to archives and collections in Paris to rediscover the women of the tapestry-making industry in France during the economic and moral crises of the 1930s and 40s. WiH also offered a teaching grant to Dr Emily Coit, a Junior Research Fellow at Worcester

College, to write a book chapter on the American novelist Edith Wharton. This work aimed to situate the critical representation of female scholars and female scholarship in Wharton's first book *The Valley of Decision* (1902) within the history of professional literary studies and Victorian political thought more widely. WiH has also awarded a visiting fellowship and two postdoctoral writing fellowships to enable early career scholars to write up an aspect of their doctoral research for publication. It is anticipated that these awards will bring the best international scholars to Oxford and create a global network for WiH.

WiH also funded a graduate conference, which was awarded to the current cohort of students on the MSt in Women's Studies. They organised a highly successful one-day conference 'Teaching to Transgress: 20 Years of Women's Studies at Oxford'. The conference aims fitted with the aspirations of WiH 'to celebrate the rich and diverse research that the Women's Studies Master's at Oxford offers'. The conference's interdisciplinary approach stayed true to the diverse research of the Women's Studies MSt, as well as to the wider feminist project, by breaking down and reformulating strict disciplinary boundaries. The conference organisers Charlotte de Val and Eleri Watson explained that an interdisciplinary approach 'allows us to learn from our peers to an ever greater extent, forcing us to reconsider our methodological and critical approaches'.

'Teaching to Transgress' was a great success, drawing more than 100 participants from across the world and generating very favourable social media coverage for its support of women and feminist research in academia. Access to the conference materials, including all the day's presentations and discussions have been made available through free podcasts. One of the wider outcomes of the project is to create an alumni network of MSt students to aid in both the support of women in academia as well as for the organisation of future feminist events and conferences.

Since its foundation the MSt in Women's Studies has encouraged women to push the boundaries and thrive within academia. WiH seeks to continue this legacy, offering rich opportunities to promote female scholarship as well as to stimulate world-leading research and teaching into the lives, experiences and identities of women across the humanities.

Dr Selina Todd, Dr Senia Paseta and Dr Naomi Pullin

EARLY CAREER

Establishing student-governed projects that bring together graduates from various disciplines across the humanities has been a unique chance to exchange ideas and start to develop a collaborative cohort of humanities graduate students at Oxford.

Adele Bardazzi and Alexis Brown,
DPhil candidates and Graduate Project Coordinators

The division's training team works with TORCH in order to help humanities early career researchers hone and develop the skills they use for their projects, get first-hand experience engaging with the public and make the first steps towards pioneering and influential career paths. The training programme is designed to resonate with TORCH's research themes for the year: for instance, alongside TORCH's *Humanities and Science* events humanities and sciences doctoral and postdoctoral researchers were busy working together on their narrative and storytelling skills and designed some fascinating posters for the Humanities Poster Competition, while humanities researchers had the chance to work on a number of entrepreneurship challenges with fellow students from the Oxford Saïd Business School as part of the *Humanities and Business* mini-season of events.

The researcher development programme has combined innovative interdisciplinary workshops with exciting researcher-led initiatives that are the first of their kind in the world. Among these are the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-TORCH Graduate Fund, the AHRC-TORCH Student Peer Review College, and the AHRC-TORCH Public Engagement Summer School.

AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund

The AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund is a student-led initiatives fund with a twist: that is, students can apply for funding for public engagement-related initiatives but the

Dr John Miles,
Humanities
Training Officer



fund is also *governed* by the students themselves. By giving students experience of the other side of the funding fence, the fund aims to improve their ability to write funding proposals and to seek out funding for their projects, and to offer opportunities to develop and put into practice a range of transferable skills involved in leading, selecting and organising academic projects both for the students leading the fund and the award recipients. Four doctoral researcher-led projects were awarded funding for 2014–15: two conferences (*The Oxford Nahda Workshop* and *Diversity in 20th- and 21st-Century Greek Popular Culture(s) and Media*) and two podcast series (*RightsUp*, with the Oxford Human Rights Hub, and *The Historical Present*).

The Oxford Nahda Workshop

The Oxford Nahda Workshop 2015 was held on 22 and 23 April, and brought together scholars from around the world for two days of intensive and fascinating discussions around the Arab Nahda of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The workshop engaged a wide range of issues and topics, from global liberalism to word and book histories; from notions of time in Nahda literature to cartoons and ideas of musical taste; from student strikes in Egypt to the Alawi reform movement in Syria.

Diversity in 20th- and 21st-Century Greek Popular Culture(s) and Media

Held on 14 March 2015, this workshop invited participants to investigate the concept of Greek identity in a context of



multiculturalism and diversity through various disciplinary lenses, such as Social Anthropology, Film Studies, History, Literary Studies, International Relations and Modern Greek Studies (among others). The workshop was especially interested in how popular forms (graphic novels, film, video games, comics, etc), usually ignored in academic discourse, may illuminate our reading of what constitutes Greekness in this pluralistic context.

AHRC–TORCH Student Peer Review College

Modelled on the AHRC's Peer Review College, and devised in consultation with the AHRC, the Student Peer Review College was launched in 2014–15 to examine and select the best applications from those who apply to the AHRC–TORCH Graduate Fund. Members were selected from current graduate students in the humanities based on demonstrated interest and experience, before being trained by the Humanities Division in peer review technique. The Student Peer Review College is in place to ensure the most equitable and rigorous selection process possible, while also

offering valuable experience and training to its members. Like the fund itself, it is a completely new and unprecedented initiative.

Public Engagement Summer School

The AHRC–TORCH Public Engagement Summer School (27–31 July 2015) consisted of 5 days of skills workshops, lectures and small group sessions designed to furnish its 20 Oxford humanities participants with the skills to integrate public engagement into their research. Sessions on online skills (WordPress, blogging, writing for different audiences, basic information about website development/coding) and presentation skills (TV, radio and more general presentations) helped prepare attendees to construct and deliver a pitch for their own public engagement project on the final day of the school and a chance to receive funding to pursue it in the coming year. Three awards were made at the end of the week, and we are very much looking forward to seeing the projects come to fruition in 2016.

'Translating my work into something that is actually relevant to people's lives is the principal goal of my research, yet a difficult one to achieve. This summer school is about the skills and tools I need to make the transition from the language of scholarship and academia, to the words and meanings of everyday life. What I like most – and I am most grateful for – is the sense of community among the participants: the desire to engage and understand the world in which we live.'

AHRC–TORCH Summer School participant

torch.ox.ac.uk/earlycareer

The interdisciplinary community of TORCH has been a tremendous environment in which to pursue my research, both on a personal level, and for its distinct academic benefits.



EARLY CAREER RESEA

Dr David Birks

Research Fellow in Legal and Political Philosophy

For the duration of my Early Career Fellowship, my work has addressed the question how should we punish criminal offenders? There are good grounds to think that our traditional responses to criminal wrongdoing are not morally adequate (such as imprisonment). One central area of my fellowship considers whether new developments in medicine can provide us with morally preferable alternative punishments. This fits neatly into the TORCH 2014–15 annual theme of Humanities and Science.

This is the topic of a collection of philosophical essays forthcoming with Oxford University Press called 'Treatment For Crime', which I'm co-editing with Tom Douglas (Philosophy). In April I also co-organised a two-day workshop at Kellogg College for contributors to discuss early drafts of their chapters.

The interdisciplinary environment of TORCH encouraged me to develop new different methods of teaching political philosophy. I invited 12 students from the University of Georgia to book appointments with a London-based doctor working on cutting-edge neurotreatment. This experience was created by immersive theatre company RUNHORATIO. It involved the students being diagnosed by a medical team, and receiving fake brain surgery. The aim was to encourage them to think about placebo treatments and the ethics of enhancement. It was a huge success and many of the students said it was the weirdest and most enlightening experiences of their lives. I hope to further develop this method of teaching through theatre collaborations in the future.

The interdisciplinary community of TORCH has been a tremendous environment in which to pursue my research, both on a personal level and for its distinct academic benefits. One example of the latter is when one of the TORCH fellows in History noted that some of the aims of one theory of punishment had historical precedent in her specific period of expertise. It is unlikely that I would have discovered this were it not for the informal interdisciplinary contact encouraged by TORCH.

Can I think of an example of the personal benefit of TORCH? Well, I should mention that my Pina Colada cheesecake came second overall in the TORCH bake off competition.

RESEARCHER PROFILES

Dr Ruth Scobie

Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral
Research Fellow

I've been a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at TORCH for two years, researching 18th-century fame, publicity and media, and how these concepts affected Britain's idea of itself and the world. This work necessarily crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries within the humanities, and TORCH has proved an ideal 'home base', supporting some very productive collaborations with other researchers and institutions.

This year, the close links between TORCH and the Ashmolean Museum helped me to run a public engagement project to accompany the museum's exhibition, *Love Bites: Caricatures by James Gillray*. This included a website on Georgian celebrity which gathered information from researchers and postgraduate students all over the world, and presented it as an interactive map. I also organised a public study day at the Ashmolean on Gillray and his world. More recently, as part of the Oxford Celebrity Research Network, I've been able to help out with an upcoming interdisciplinary conference on celebrity and life-writing at TORCH and the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing.

TORCH has been invaluable for my research activities at Oxford, and many of my plans for the next academic year are the results of opportunities offered, formally or informally, by the lively academic community here. I'm especially looking forward to the chance to give a public talk on 18th-century anthropology in popular culture, as part of the TORCH 'Day of the Dead' event at the Pitt Rivers Museum; and I'll also be visiting the University of Vienna to give a lecture on the history of celebrity.

TORCH has proved an ideal "home base", supporting some very productive collaborations with other researchers and institutions.





KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Over the past year TORCH has continued to support, encourage and promote knowledge exchange activities.



Our flagship Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellowship scheme has gone from strength to strength, attracting growing numbers of applications from across humanities faculties. This scheme, funded by HEIF (Higher Education Innovation Fund), provides teaching buy-out and other forms of support for University of Oxford researchers wishing to work collaboratively with external organisations; our KE Fellows have worked a variety of partners, including theatres, heritage industries, medical societies, audio technology companies, schools, NGOs and charities. This year we have benefited from additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, enabling two Humanities –Science KE Fellowships: one with the Science Museum, London, and another with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. We also successfully applied for our first Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) – a long-term collaboration with the National Trust. Building on the success of the Thames Valley Country Houses Partnership (TVCHP), this award enables researchers from all career levels and all corners of the University to help the Trust to improve their business by offering expertly researched database entries on everything from Art Deco to Zigzags.

On a personal note, I want to take this opportunity to say that my Knowledge Exchange job in TORCH has been one of the most creative and stimulating things I have done in Oxford. It has been a pleasure working with Cleo Hanaway-Oakley and Andrew Fairweather-Tall, as the KE team, and I have much enjoyed glimpsing the myriad worlds my colleagues inhabit, from the phonetics of remote telephony to the Jordanian tourist industry. The projects we have helped support have benefited from generous funding and I really hope this continues, as these resources have been vital in embedding a culture of exchange and collaboration. I was delighted to hand over my role in April to Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, whose intelligence and energy will make her a great advocate for the academic community. I hope she enjoys it as much as I did.

Professor Abigail Williams, Knowledge Exchange Champion

torch.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange

Celebrating 500 Years of Pregnancy and Birth

torch.ox.ac.uk/birth

Celebrating 500 years of Pregnancy and Birth is a partnership between Professor Valerie Worth-Stylianou, the Library Services of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (London) and the De Partu History of Childbirth Group. The Royal College is home to the heritage collections of both the Royal College and of the Royal College of Midwives, and its library is used by the college's fellows and members, midwives and student midwives, and other health professionals and academics. Under its Archivist and Records Manager, the college is committed to making both current and heritage materials accessible to all stakeholders. The partnership presents medical teaching and patient perception of pregnancy and birth through a historical prism, drawing on the particularly rich collection of early modern printed books, in various European languages, held in the Royal College's library.

Hardly a week goes by without a story or advice about pregnancy or birth making headline news, from royal births to the latest guidance on what to eat in pregnancy. The partnership locates this public fascination in a broad historical context, by comparing debates and controversies over the last five centuries. Topics presented in the exhibition and to be discussed at the study days in London (2015) and Oxford (2016) include midwifery training, favoured delivery positions, premature births, breastfeeding, and who used to be present at a birth. The first study day was held at the Royal College on 4 September 2015, bringing together academic researchers, healthcare practitioners (midwives and doctors) and representatives from patients' groups.

Valerie Worth was also a keynote speaker at the study day held at the maternity hospital of Port-Royal, Paris, in June 2015 by the Société de l'Histoire de la Naissance; she presented her current research on how fertility and sterility were understood in 16th- and 17th-century France.

Professor Valerie Worth

Compassion in Healthcare

torch.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange/compassion

The Compassion in Healthcare project is a Knowledge Exchange initiative led by Dr Joshua Hordern, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics (Faculty of Theology and Religion), in partnership with the Royal Society of Medicine, represented by Dr Andrew Papanikitas, who was later appointed as Academic Clinical Lecturer in General Practice at the Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. During autumn 2014 we held three events which drew together healthcare practitioners with researchers in humanities and social sciences. We explored the meaning of compassion for healthcare in relation to law, politics, philosophy, theology, citizenship and education. The final event, attended by 100 participants from a range of healthcare backgrounds, was held at the Royal Society of Medicine and received very positive feedback. The partnership led to further successful joint proposals including a project exploring markets and private sector involvement in healthcare, funded by the British Academy.

Following this initial project, colleagues from humanities, social sciences and medical sciences and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group have formed the Oxford Healthcare Values Partnership (OHVP). Our goal is to research issues relating to the ethos of healthcare and make that research count practically in healthcare institutions. We have received financial support from the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund to pursue this agenda.

Among other projects, we will be coordinating a series of seminars on compassion, collaborating with healthcare practitioners in the Oxford University Hospitals Trust and especially Dr Claire Pulford, Divisional Educational Lead for Medicine. We will also initiate a project on ethical and political questions relating to personalised ('stratified') medicine, convened by Dr Hordern and Professor Tim Maughan, Professor of Clinical Oncology.

Professor Joshua Hordern

Eating Disorders and Real-life Reading

torch.ox.ac.uk/eatingdisordersandreading

What effects do you think your reading choices might have on your wellbeing – and do you think you choose what you read based partly on how you already feel? In a six-month partnership with the eating disorders charity Beat,



I began to investigate the connections between fiction-reading and disordered eating – asking both whether a history of disordered eating might affect reading choices and ways of reading, and whether reading particular types of texts might have helpful or harmful effects on how an eating disorder develops. These interactions are remarkably under-researched, and to scope out the field for future research we conducted a major online survey, asking people about their reading habits and what connections they perceive, if any, between their reading and their mental health.

The research officer at Beat, Jonathan Kelly, co-designed and managed the survey, and thanks to Beat's contacts and publicity strategies, and the generosity of our respondents, we gathered almost 900 responses worldwide, many of which included richly thoughtful reflections on personal experience. Preliminary analysis suggests strong effects of reading on dimensions such as mood, self-esteem, people's feelings about their bodies and their diet and exercise habits, and also indicates that both the type of text being read and the reader's personal history may modulate these effects in significant ways. This provides a solid foundation for designing a programme of experimental research to start to test out relationships of cause and effect between textual and psychological factors.

A workshop at the end of the project brought together participants including Jonathan and me, clinical researchers on eating disorders, anthropologists, a GP, a scriptwriter and a neuroscientist to read and write some fiction together and talk about how reading and writing might relate to mental health. We ended up with some lovely short stories, and lots of exciting questions and hypotheses to draw into future research.

Working with Beat has had an irreplaceable impact on how I think about my research – its aims and methods, and where to take it next.

Dr Emily T. Troscianko



Mediating Modern Poetry

torch.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange/mediatingmodernpoetry

The Mediating Modern Poetry project is a collaboration with the Southbank Centre to bring together poets, translators, scholars and members of the public from around the globe to consider the intricacies of mediating contemporary poetry, the relationship between performance and translation, and the reception of translated works.

The fellowship has staged a diverse range of public events, including discussions, performances and workshops. We brought *Agenda*, a highly respected poetry journal, to Oxford to launch its issue 'Requiem: European Poetry of the First World War' in the centenary year, and also to mark the journal's 50th year. An event at the Southbank on the reception of Rilke brought several key German and English contemporary poets to London to read their work, discuss their relationship with the great Austrian poet and translation in the widest sense. Some of the newly commissioned work was published in *MPT* (July 2014) along with podcasts of the readings and translations. There was also a very popular translation masterclass with Patrick McGuinness on the French Rilke and Karen Leeder on the German Rilke, which was attended by schoolchildren and students.

The project's success with schoolchildren has led to a proposal to take the project into three local schools where I will work on translating Rilke. I have also enjoyed working with young poets through 'Perspectives on Poetry', a new series in collaboration with 'Poet in the City', which brought young German poets to the UK for the first time to explore the links between poetry and the other arts for a variety of alternative performance venues across the country including the Richmix arts centre in Shoreditch.

It was always important to take events outside the capital and Mediating Modern Poetry has brought distinguished poets to the UK (Jan Wagner, Volker Braun, Durs Grünbein, Michael Krüger, Ulrike Almut Sandig, Ulrike Draesner) and

taken events and workshops to various venues including Aldeburgh International Poetry Festival 2014, Cork Poetry Festival 2015, Reading Poetry Festival 2015 and universities around the UK. Unexpectedly the project was also invited to take events to Italy (a reading and workshop to the Sapienza in collaboration with the Goethe Institute); and Berlin to the Akademie der Künste.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with so many wonderful collaborators including the Southbank Centre, Poet in the City, emerging and established poets, young people, translators, and scholars across the UK and beyond. The project has energised my research, brought new perspectives to my translation and revitalised my appreciation for poetry. I look forward to continuing the partnerships built through the project over the coming years.

Professor Karen Leeder

Storming Utopia

torch.ox.ac.uk/themes/stormingutopia

Storming Utopia was designed as an exercise in practical utopianism; a partnership set up to explore the constitution of ideal communities, it brought together members of the Pegasus Theatre, Oxford, and early modern academic colleagues in and beyond the University of Oxford. Exploring ways of making contemporary theatrical sense of Thomas More's *Utopia*, crossed with Shakespeare's *Tempest*, the project ran from May to July 2015. The central questions we set ourselves to think about were: what are the laws and customs of this place? who owns, runs, or governs the city state? who works here? who has access to what parts of it? where are the gates, and who looks after the keys? how do you get in, and how do you leave? These are all questions both More and Shakespeare ask, and they all still matter today.

Out of the process of discussion, improvisation and rehearsal lasting almost three months there emerged a number of creative 'encounters', including: a new half-hour multimedia play loosely based on the *Tempest*, set in and around Cowley Centre, scripted by myself and Angharad Arnott Phillips; a short film entitled 'The Flood', which was made in co-operation with London-based film-maker Kris Deedigan and formed a central part of the



play; a specially commissioned piece of music for the play, 'Shipwrecksong', by the up and coming local rock band Lucy Leave, which premiered at two 'Storming Utopia' events in the Jericho Tavern and in Worcester College Gardens; and a graffiti 'mural' produced by artist and set designer Nomi Overall, which took the form of a triptych canvas map of Oxford that was also a reworking of Renaissance maps of Utopia.

In terms of location, personnel and 'outcomes', and in all three modes of exploration (discussion, workshop, performance), we managed to 'storm' utopia not just by way of the *Tempest*, but also by way of an engaged and concerted attempt to cross the boundaries that define the political geography and the 'knowledge economies' of contemporary Oxford.

Professor Wes Williams

Thames Valley Country House Partnership

torch.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange/tvchp

'Working with Oliver has proved massively valuable for us. It has enabled us to rethink and rearticulate key spaces, objects and stories. The result has been overwhelmingly positive, with staff, volunteers and visitors all agreeing how much more engaging and stimulating our story has become.'

Rob Bandy, Heritage Manager, Hughenden

At the end of its second year the Thames Valley Country House Partnership (TVCHP) is recognised across the University and heritage sectors as an example of best practice in Knowledge Exchange. The partnership explores the variety of ways in which University of Oxford expertise can be shared more widely with external partners in the heritage sector.

There have been a number of notable successes. I have secured the University of Oxford's first ever Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) in the Humanities with the National Trust in London & South East. This project, Trusted Source, is co-funded by Innovate UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the National Trust, and will crowd-source academically rigorous insight with the aim of improving visitor experience at a number of pilot properties. Alison Evans (National Trust London and South East) said the University 'has shown us how harnessing the best academic knowledge available opens up debate and conversations and stimulates our thinking about how to interpret the cultural history of our properties in new ways'. Responding to the requirements of our National Trust partners, we have developed a process called 'Story Interventions', which sees Oxford's early career researchers help reinterpret and represent



rooms, objects and displays. The process has been trialled at Hughenden Manor, Uppark and Ham House and will continue throughout 2016. In addition, we have negotiated a strategic partnership with the National Trust, which will allow Oxford researchers to develop collaborative projects with those properties undergoing substantial conservation work.

In addition to properties managed by the National Trust, TVCHP works with a number of private and charitable trust-owned historic houses. TORCH was one of the funders of the inaugural artist in residence at Kelmscott Manor; working with Professor Jane Humphries, our Sanderson Fund-supported research assistants have explored the archives of Blenheim Palace, Broughton Castle and the Stowe Papers in the Huntington Library, California; I acted as academic advisor for Stowe House Preservation Trust's HLF-supported Discovery and Learning Centre and helped curate *Canaletto: Celebrating Britain* at Compton Verney.

I was invited to take part, with Sir Roy Strong and other sector leaders, in the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Victoria & Albert Museum's seminal 1974 *Destruction of the English Country House* exhibition; I have co-founded the European Forum for Research into Estates, Houses and Families; spoken at a number of conferences highlighting best practice in Knowledge Exchange (for example, NCCPE Engage 2014); developed a number of Executive Education modules together with TVCHP partner houses and the Said Business School; and created a series of 'Working with Heritage' training events with Dr John Miles. In addition, I have secured over £15,000 from the University's Careers Service to provide bursaries for undergraduate and postgraduate internships.

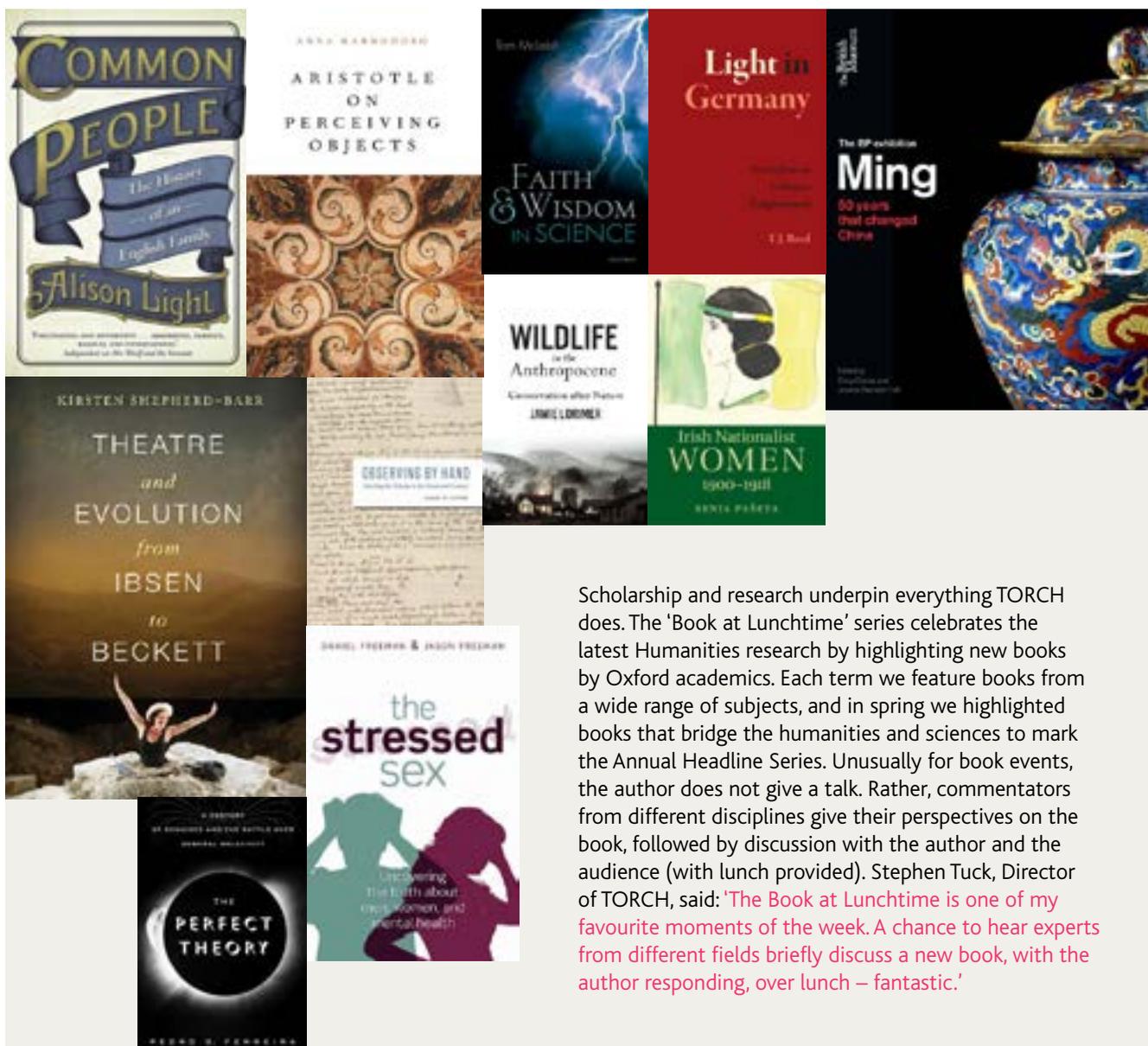
TVCHP is now recognised as an innovative response to the needs of academia to demonstrate 'impact' and of the country house sector to refresh and renew their visitor offer.

Dr Oliver Cox

BOOK AT LUNCHTIME

'The TORCH book seminar gave me both encouragement that *Faith and Wisdom in Science* had struck a creative nerve of debate, and also stimulated me to think afresh about some of its open questions.'

Tom McLeish



Scholarship and research underpin everything TORCH does. The 'Book at Lunchtime' series celebrates the latest Humanities research by highlighting new books by Oxford academics. Each term we feature books from a wide range of subjects, and in spring we highlighted books that bridge the humanities and sciences to mark the Annual Headline Series. Unusually for book events, the author does not give a talk. Rather, commentators from different disciplines give their perspectives on the book, followed by discussion with the author and the audience (with lunch provided). Stephen Tuck, Director of TORCH, said: 'The Book at Lunchtime is one of my favourite moments of the week. A chance to hear experts from different fields briefly discuss a new book, with the author responding, over lunch – fantastic.'

ENGAGING WITH MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES



Fausto Podavini, *MirRella*



Gregg Segal, *Remembered*



Hayley Morris, *still from Undone*

In the past year TORCH has engaged with museums and galleries in Oxford and beyond, and is working on a range of collaborative projects in the coming year. TORCH Business Manager Victoria McGuinness said:

'One of TORCH's core strategic aims is to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration through creative research environments. Museums are fantastic places to communicate research and engage wider and public audiences.'

As part of the 'Humanities and Science' series TORCH worked with the O3 Gallery, based at the Oxford Castle Quarter, to stage an exhibition *That Other Place* exploring Alzheimer's from the dual perspectives of sufferer and carer through photography and film. The works were also available to view online and in a short film. Helen Statham, O3 Gallery Director, said:

'That Other Place is a fantastic example of how two very different organisations can share and combine resources to produce an innovative cultural product, which would not have been possible in isolation. It is a great honour for us to work with the University of Oxford and their support and cooperation throughout this project has been tremendous. It is important for us as a cultural organisation to address the topic of Alzheimer's as I believe we have a social responsibility to explore the key questions and experiences of our generation, and equipped with the universal language of visual imagery, we are in a strong position to do this.'

TORCH also worked closely with the Ashmolean Museum this year to bring University researchers into closer contact with the museum's collections. Through the 'Ashmolean Project Portal' we supported a range of projects, from exhibition tours to online resources, with many led by early career scholars. The scholars engaged with a range of exhibitions including William Blake: Apprentice and Master, Love Bites: Characters by James Gillray, and Bengal and Modernity: Early 20th Century Art in India, feeding their experiences back into their research. DPhil student Edward Youansamouth said, 'The Blake exhibition related to my research on the connection between Blake's artistic practice and his apocalyptic desire to unveil the "Infinite in all things". Through my involvement with the exhibition I was able to learn more about the technical aspects of Blake's engraving process, which are crucial to grasping its theological significance.'



TORCH | ANNUAL HEADLINE SERIES

Humanities and Science

In spring 2015 TORCH's Humanities and Science series explored how new answers can be found – and new research questions can be set – by bringing the disciplines together. The programme will showcase many of the existing research projects in Oxford that already cross the disciplines, as well as providing an incubation space for new collaborative projects. With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the series supported two joint doctoral studentships (see pp 34–35), which are enabling science and humanities postholders in Oxford to develop joint research projects, and a Knowledge Exchange Partnership with the Science Museum in London (to take place in 2015–16).

There was a special series of events including discussions, a performance and an exhibition. The opening event of the series, 'Narrative and Proof', brought together mathematicians Roger Penrose and Marcus du Sautoy, poet Ben Okri, and literary scholars Laura Marcus and Elleke Boehmer to consider how narrative shapes the sciences as well as the arts. It was attended by over 450 people, including 60 school students, and was livestreamed around the globe to countries including the US, Canada, Ireland and Brazil. The event was followed by a series of lunchtime discussions bringing together scholars from the humanities and sciences, artists and practitioners, to explore: mental health; randomness and order; representing science; and culture and technology.

Our networks and programmes embraced the 'Humanities and Science' theme, with the Dance Scholarship programme exploring the relationship between dance and neuroscience with Wayne McGregor, Resident Choreographer of the Royal Ballet and Artistic Director of Random Dance (see p 17). The Enlightenment programme held a conference bringing together historians of science, philosophers and literary scholars to re-evaluate Madame Du Châtelet's contribution to the Enlightenment. We also worked with galleries and museums on joint projects, including an exhibition in collaboration with the O3 Gallery



which explored Alzheimer's from the dual perspectives of sufferer and carer through photography and film (see p 31). This is just a taste of some of the work that has bridged the humanities and the sciences this year, and much more can be found throughout the Annual Review.

Activities continue into the next academic year, with an event in collaboration with the Museum of Natural History celebrating the life and legacy of the dodo, which is part of the Being Human festival of humanities; an event in partnership with the Compton Verney Gallery and the Chemistry Department looking at the cultural significance of chemical elements; a panel discussion hosted with the Museum of History of Science debating the ethics of sending scientists to war; and a conference in collaboration with Computer Science celebrating 200 years since the birth of computer visionary Ada Lovelace.





The inaugural panel "Narrative and Proof" prompted high-level debate amongst the disciplines by revealing not just their synergies but the limits of their engagement. Playfully testing the viability of a simple change of pronouns – from "narrative *and* proof" to "narrative *as* proof" – the lively discussion around this deceptively tiny change not only showed the intricacies and challenges of integrating different fields, but modelled a form of interdisciplinarity that highlighted the best practices of each domain and generated something deeply illuminating from their interaction.

Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, Professor of English and Theatre Studies, University of Oxford



Working with humanities scholars gives my science work a deeper and more satisfying framing – and also leads, perhaps surprisingly, to new science.
[Tom McLeish, Professor of Physics, Durham University, and Vice-President \(Science\), Institute of Physics](#)

Oxford is a vibrant centre for interdisciplinary scholarship, and the headline series at TORCH showed how mind-expanding the dialogue between the Humanities and Sciences continues to be.
[Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, Professor of English and Theatre Studies, University of Oxford](#)

Bringing the humanities back in to the study of mental health would, in turn, bring care of the mind and brain into the heart of Oxford life. It seems the obvious place to do it as one of the objectives of the University is to maximise the ability of the human mind to seek and transmit knowledge.
[John Geddes, Head of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford](#)

Narrative is woven into the fabric of consciousness as mathematics is woven into the fabric of the world.
[Ben Okri, Writer](#)

Breakthroughs come very often from asking new questions. By creating an environment for the humanities and the sciences to come together there is the hope that each might offer the other new ways to look at their subject.
[Marcus du Sautoy, Charles Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science](#)

My involvement in dialogues and collaborations with scientists over many years has added new dimensions and perspectives to my practice as a visual artist.
[Annie Cattrell, Artist and Reader in Fine Art, University of Leicester](#)





MELLON FOUNDATION FUNDED DOCTORAL STUDENTSHIPS

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY AND LIFETIME RESILIENCE

In 2014–15 experimental psychologist Dr Lucy Bowes and historian Dr Siân Pooley started to work together on an innovative research project on Childhood Adversity and Lifetime Resilience. Their collaboration was inspired by the opportunity to apply for two doctoral studentships funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, as part of the TORCH programme to bring together the humanities and sciences. Here they discuss their exciting research project.

What is the research project about?

Lucy Bowes: We want to understand how people who experienced stressful life events and adversity in childhood were affected by these experiences across the course of their lives. Our aim is to bring together historical and psychological approaches to examine how people responded to, and found ways to live with, the individual effects of diverse forms of disadvantage, including abuse, neglect, poverty and the breakdown of familial relationships. Research on resilience following early life stress has tended to focus on the short-term. Little is known about the long-term impact of these early experiences, and how – and to what extent – men and women navigated pathways to resilience across their lifetime. This project will begin to fill these gaps in the literature, and aims to contribute to improvements in contemporary policy and practice.

How will you find out about this?

Siân Pooley: We will use archived case files to study the experiences of children who were identified as growing up in difficult circumstances in 20th-century Britain. We are interested in the changing and diverse ways in which children were cared for, how they were viewed by society, and how they interpreted their own lives. This deeply contextualised qualitative understanding will then be linked to, and correlated with, subjective, social, psychological and physiological outcomes across the life-course. We cannot understand what care, interventions and relationships

supported these men and women best without first knowing how these cohorts experienced and perceived adversity when young.

Jono Taylor will be studying for a DPhil in the Faculty of History. Can you tell us what you will be working on as a graduate student?

Jono Taylor: I am particularly interested in how children's experiences of maltreatment compare with later accounts provided by adults. One way I plan to achieve this is by studying the lives of people who spent time in mid-20th-century children's homes and have subsequently been interviewed about their experiences. I hope to understand how adults constructed self-narratives and how these accounts relate to their childhoods recorded in the archives. I am also interested in exploring the importance of place in shaping the well-being of vulnerable children.

Michelle Degli Esposti will be studying for a DPhil in the Department of Experimental Psychology. What will you be researching?

Michelle Degli Esposti: The British Cohort Studies have developed datasets since 1946 that track people from birth to late adulthood. I will quantitatively compare maltreated children who went on to suffer from mental health difficulties to those who showed relative resilience to these difficulties. By better understanding these divergent outcomes for people who had similar early experiences, we might learn how to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

When I saw the TORCH doctoral studentship advertised, I almost had to pinch myself – it fitted perfectly with my academic interests and complemented my clinical and research experience, whilst the interdisciplinary aspect was an exciting and innovative addition. I am very grateful to be working on such a fascinating and promising project, and am itching to get started!



When I saw the TORCH doctoral studentship advertised, I almost had to pinch myself...

THE MENTAL AND MATERIAL LABORATORY OF THIRTEENTH -CENTURY SCIENCE

The overwhelming misconception of modern science graduates is that, prior to the development of the scientific method during the 16th-century, natural philosophy was dominated by dogma, religious authority and superstition.

On the other hand, Crombie has made the bold and widely propagated claim that the father of western experimental science was Robert Grosseteste, who in the 13th-century wrote magnificent works on topics including light, colour, the rainbow, sound and the movement of the celestial spheres, describing an ambitious framework for understanding natural phenomena using all the resources available to him. In this project we will seek a deeper appreciation of 13th-century accounts of natural phenomena by understanding the interplay between the intellectual and material environments of the period.

In order to experience these environments through the same lens as the contemporary scholars, this project will develop an integrated understanding of inherited frameworks of knowledge and the available material world. This will be done through an interdisciplinary approach led by students with a background in science (Joshua Harvey) and medieval theology (Tim Farrant). We will complement textual analyses with physical reconstructions of the materials and observational tools available in the 13th-century, recreating and analysing relevant phenomena with careful consideration of those resources which may have been available to the medieval scholar, supplemented where appropriate by more modern techniques.

An important aspect of the research will be to understand the balance between inherited knowledge and original observation, exploring what might be termed the mental 'laboratory' of 13th-century scientific writers. The influence of Aristotle and his Islamic and Jewish commentators takes the bulk of attention in this field, but we will also consider

the important contributions of Augustinian influences, which are often undeservedly forgotten. By combining this with the physical reconstructions, we will develop a deeper appreciation for the intellectual processes that led to the medieval explanation of natural phenomena as explained in the texts, allowing us to interpret the discussions as they would have appeared to contemporary scholars. Thus we will not judge the content of the texts in modern terms, but gain a deeper appreciation of the logic and thought processes of the authors and their contemporaries.

The supervisory team will consist of Carol Harrison (Theology), Giles Gasper (Medieval History, University of Durham), Clive Siviour (Engineering) and Hannah Smithson (Experimental Psychology), combining an understanding of the intellectual framework of the period, practical manufacturing resources and modelling expertise, and the ability to objectively quantify human sensory discriminations, which would have been the primary measurement tool available at the time. The project presents outreach opportunities through engagement with organisations such as Oxford Archaeology and publications for a more general audience. We will also interact closely with the AHRC-funded Ordered Universe Project, which deals more specifically with the work of Grosseteste. The project will culminate in a public exhibition that will immerse the visitor in the medieval scientific world, where the story is told through parallel presentation of relevant texts and hands-on demonstrations, with broader descriptions of the intellectual inheritance of the age. Without the generous support of the Mellon Foundation a project of this nature would have been almost inconceivable, and we are eagerly looking forward to the unique opportunities afforded by such highly interdisciplinary research.

Professor Clive Siviour

HUMANITAS

TORCH is home to the Oxford arm of the Humanitas Programme, which brings leading practitioners and scholars to Oxford and Cambridge Universities to address major themes in the arts, social sciences and humanities. All events are open to the public and available as podcasts, allowing the discussions to reach a diverse and world-wide audience. In 2014–15 TORCH hosted five Visiting Professors, including internationally renowned historian Barbara Rosenwein, virtuoso opera singer Ian Bostridge, and award-winning playwright David Edgar. They came to Oxford from around the globe to explore topics as diverse as the history of emotions, Schubert's song cycles and the death of the playwright. The events have drawn together thousands of audience members to watch unique performances, participate in debates, and hear about the latest discoveries in different fields.

The programme was founded by Lord Weidenfeld and is funded with the support of generous benefactors through the Weidenfeld Hoffman Trust. The programmes are managed by TORCH in Oxford and CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) in Cambridge.

The most unlikely of disciplines can offer inspiration to each other. Sciences inspire the arts, the arts the sciences.

Ian Bostridge

Humanitas Visiting

Professors 2014–15:

Ian Bostridge | Classical Music

David Edgar | Drama Studies

John McLaughlin | Intelligence Studies

Maya Lin | Contemporary Art

Professor Barbara Rosenwein | Historiography



Previous Humanitas Visiting Professors include:

Midori | Classical Music

Renée Fleming | Opera Studies

Dr Rowan Williams | Interfaith Studies

Michael Govan | Museums, Galleries and Libraries

William Kentridge | Contemporary Art

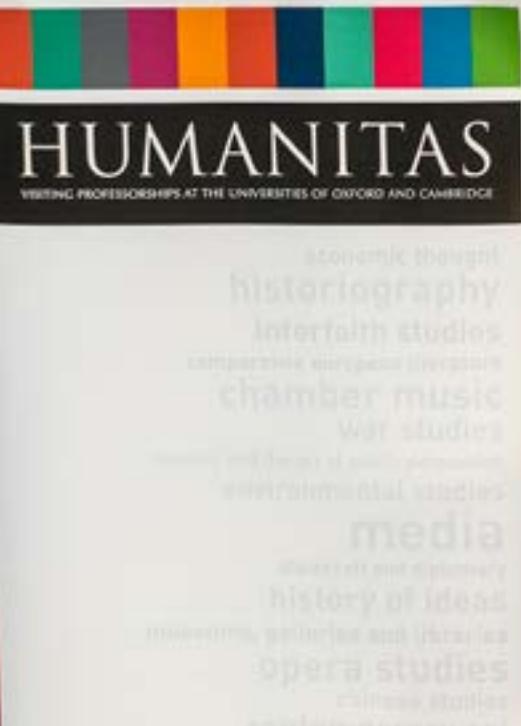
Michael Winterbottom | Film and Television

Professor Sir Christopher Bayly | Historiography

Vanessa Redgrave | Drama Studies

Mark Thompson | Rhetoric and the art of Public Persuasion





Our Humanitas Visiting Professor in Classical Music and Music Education for 2014–15 was Ian Bostridge, whose lecture on ‘Why Winterreise? Schubert’s song cycle, then and now’ was featured in the *Guardian*. An excerpt from the lecture is below.

One of the main ways through which this ideal of liberal education works, in its vision of unconstrained but disciplined intellectual exchange, is through what one might call the circulation of metaphor, so that the most unlikely of disciplines can offer inspiration to each other. Sciences inspire the arts, the arts the sciences.

My favourite historical example involves music. Musical metaphor has played a crucial role as midwife in the physical sciences from the time of Pythagoras. Musical theory was a crucial, if publicly underplayed, component in Isaac Newton’s understanding of light – through an analogy between the colour spectrum and the musical scale. The seven notes of the scale before the return to the octave are analogous to the colours of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet, plus the strangely superfluous indigo which made the number up to seven.

More significantly, Newton interpreted Pythagoras’s views on musical consonance as containing the essence of the inverse square law of gravitation, his dazzling solution to the unity of celestial and terrestrial dynamics. Thus Newton, a sort of Pythagorean magus, reinterpreted the notion of the harmony of the spheres.

If anyone thinks this sort of intellectual midwifery by metaphor is a thing of the past, they need only consider whether one of the most familiar foundational physical theories currently in play: string theory. The true meaning of string theory may be inaccessible to most of us – even to most scientists – in the complexities of its mathematical formulation, and its acceptance or non-acceptance will hang upon experimental data. But it owes at least some of its origins, and even its appeal, to the strength of the musical metaphor that seems to lie at, or at least around, its core.

At the beginning of the last century Max Weber wrote about the disenchantment of the world and the encroachment of an iron cage – or, in a more correct translation, hard steel casing – of rationality – a *Stahlhartes Gehäuse*. One of the jobs of the university is, paradoxically, to resist with reason the pernicious advance of such heedless rationalisation, with its culture of homogeneity, which can only result in intellectual entropy and what Weber called ‘a polar night of icy darkness’.

GIVING TO TORCH

TORCH enables research in Oxford to become far greater than the sum of its parts: by facilitating connections between researchers who would not have met otherwise, TORCH stimulates new, ground-breaking research. It also enables scholars to reach out beyond the academy and work with external partners around the UK. This means that when you support TORCH you are also nurturing cultural organisations, policymaking, media and charities, both locally and nationally. TORCH draws on what Oxford has long been celebrated for – its world class researchers – and multiplies their impact.

By providing small amounts of seed-funding to new research networks, TORCH has become an invaluable testing ground for innovative research projects. These projects are supported by TORCH's infrastructure, which offers free rooms for events, website hosting and advice

and investment from the TORCH team. Selected on a highly competitive basis, funding for networks lasts for up to two years, after which many networks apply for further external funding, bringing in valuable research grants to the University. Many go on to be more established research programmes at TORCH, using new approaches to tackle some of the challenging questions of our time.

An investment in TORCH goes a long way. I have supported TORCH for over a year now, and it has been wonderful to see it back so many innovative projects and people in that time. TORCH is a very young institution in the University of Oxford's 900-year history, but it has already made a great impact in the University, in the UK, and internationally, and with support I believe its impact will continue to grow.

Michael Hoffman

TORCH–Pembroke Fellowship

A new Career Development Fellowship in Women in the Humanities has been established jointly by TORCH and Pembroke College, thanks to the generosity of a private donor, Julian Schild. Schild said, 'I am delighted to support a fellowship that allows an outstanding early career researcher to enjoy the benefits of Oxford's traditional college system and the opportunity to work with colleagues across the University, and beyond, at TORCH.'

The three-year post will be taken up by Dr Imaobong Umoren, following a very competitive selection process. On receiving news of her appointment Dr Umoren was delighted, explaining that the post 'will provide me with time to develop two research projects on African, African American, and Caribbean women's history in the 20th century. Being based at TORCH and Pembroke College will strengthen my interdisciplinary approach and allow me to interact and collaborate with a number of scholars in the fields of history, literary studies, psychology, anthropology and theology. It will also enable me to organise academic and public events. During the fellowship, I am also excited to take part in Pembroke College's award-winning Access scheme.' Dame Lynne Brindley, Master of Pembroke, commented:

'Pembroke is delighted to welcome Dr Umoren, a talented and impressive academic whose research and writings on black women's history in the 20th-century are already adding much to her field. We look forward to the contribution she will make to our activities and to academic debate here in college.'

Professor Stephen Tuck, Director of TORCH, added: 'Imaobong Umoren is an outstanding early career researcher whose work on global race women relates to a variety of TORCH programmes. We are looking forward to welcoming her to TORCH.'

We are extremely grateful to all our supporters. If you would like to make a gift to TORCH, please contact Antony Green, Head of Development – Humanities, antony.green@humanities.ox.ac.uk, 01865 731135.





Finance Report 2014–15

TORCH has now completed its second full year in operation (2014–15) and continues to support, facilitate and encourage interdisciplinary research.

As part of the University of Oxford's Humanities Division, TORCH is based in the Radcliffe Humanities building in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

TORCH is funded by various sources, including the University's John Fell Fund, with additional support from Trusts and Foundations, as well as private donors. TORCH is grateful to have also received funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the Humanities and Science Series, as well as other donations totalling close to £1.2 million for the years 2013–18.

Income (August 2014–July 2015)	
University of Oxford Fell Grant	£112,561
Trusts and Foundations	£117,547
Donations (used for 2014–15)	£47,297
Donations held for future research activity	£112,618
TOTAL	£390,023

Expenditure (August 2014–July 2015)	
Staff and running costs	£140,793
Research Networks, Programmes, projects and events	£136,610
TOTAL	£277,404



20

research
networks



9

major
research
programmes

knowledge
exchange
fellows

10+



30+

early career fellows



350+

research-led events
with over **13,000**
attendees