



HumSci News

Keeping Friends of Human Sciences in touch

2021 Edition

Introduction from the Head of the Institute

Hilary Term – a tough, though rewarding, one, both for students and for teachers – is over and spring has come to Oxford. We are looking forward to a good break and a fulfilling final term of the academic year.

As alumni of the degree, I do not need to tell you how wonderful the Oxford Human Sciences degree is. We are, as you know, the only degree in Oxford to take teaching from all four academic Divisions (for interdisciplinarity, PPE, for all its qualities, doesn't even come close). HumSci graduates have gone on to do extraordinary and world-saving things, as we begin to outline [here](#).

We will be celebrating 50 years of the Human Sciences degree during the Alumni Weekend 16th–18th September. There will be special lectures by Sir Simon Baron-Cohen and Susana Carvalho and a roundtable on Human Sciences and its contributions in the Pauling Human Sciences Institute. There will be a picnic in the University Parks, a reception in the garden of 61 Banbury Rd, and a dinner in Wadham College attended by the Chancellor and Lady Patten. Sarah-Jane White will email shortly with details of how to sign up for the dinner.

The Human Sciences degree was founded 50 years ago in the teeth of considerable opposition thanks largely to the vision and determination of one man, Linacre Professor of Zoology, John Pringle (1912–1982). He understood that only a broad education encompassing both biological and social sciences would equip Oxford graduates with the skills to solve the world's problems. Today, the degree is a jewel in Oxford's crown, though many do not yet realise it. We have between six and seven applicants for every place – meaning that there is huge demand. Yet, the degree continues to face challenges, both financial and logistical. One key structural problem is that colleges are free to decide which degrees they accept students for. We have lost many colleges over the years (Somerville, Jesus, St Anne's, LMH, among others; most recently New College). Human Sciences places at St Benet's and the much longer-standing Mansfield are also now under threat.

Our strategy in response to this situation is to concentrate on those colleges that share our commitment to Human Sciences. For the degree to survive and thrive for the next 50 years, we need your help. In order to secure the teaching of Oxford Human Sciences for the future we aim to endow key academic posts in supporter colleges.

Over the next few years, we seek to raise £12.5 million, which would enable us (1) to create a Professorship of Human Sciences to provide leadership within the degree; (2) to endow two Associate Professorship Tutorial Fellow positions in Human Sciences in colleges, on the model of the

Clarendon-Lienhardt Associate Professorship in St Hugh's College (currently held by Thomas Cousins); (3) to provide studentships.

If we are successful in this appeal, it will be transformational for the degree, further enhancing its profile within the university and enabling us to increase student numbers (getting closer to our target of 40 students a year) and to expand the exciting interdisciplinary [research](#) that is done by members of the Institute. If you can help in any way, whether financially or by way of introductions to individuals and organisations that share our commitment to Human Sciences, please do get in touch with me or with Sarah-Jane.

I look forward to welcoming you at the Alumni Weekend in September,

Best wishes David Gellner (david.gellner@anthro.ox.ac.uk)

Congratulations to:

Anvee Bhutani who has been elected Oxford's SU President for 2021-22. Anvee is a third year Human Scientist at Magdalen College. She has held leading roles in numerous University societies including President of the Oxford India Society and Oxford American Society, Managing Director of The Oxford Blue, Media Editor of Cherwell, Treasurer of the Oxford Hindu Society, Events Officer of Oxford Law Society. Anvee has also been an Access Ambassador for Magdalen College and was Co-Chair of the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality (CRAE). Her platform included academic and access issues such as lobbying for lecture capture and pushing for a more diverse curriculum; community affairs including campaigning for the living wage to be paid across all colleges and supporting the homeless population working with Turl Street Homelessness Action and Oxford Coalition Against Homelessness Action; welfare and mental health issues including lobbying for more funding towards existing mental health support programmes and working for more access and lower wait times for university counselling services.



Professor Sir Simon Baron Cohen who was awarded a Knights Bachelor in the 2021 New Year's Honours list for services to peoples with Autism. Sir Simon read Human Sciences at New College, graduating in 1981. Following the completion of his undergraduate degree he took a PhD in Psychology at University College London.

He is currently a Professor in the Department of Psychology and Psychiatry in the University of Cambridge, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and has been Director of the Autism Research Centre, Cambridge since 1997. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, the British Academy, the Academy of Medical Sciences and the American Psychological Association. He is Vice-President of the National Autistic Society and was President of the International Society for Autism Research from 2017 to 2019.



As author of over 600 peer reviewed scientific articles he has made many contributions to autism research. His books include *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*; *The Essential Difference*; and *Zero degrees of Empathy*. His recent work *The Pattern Seekers: A New Theory of Human Invention* puts forward the theory that human invention is due to an ability to identify 'if-and-then' patterns and that these genes overlap with those linked to autism.

He discussed his theory on [BBC Radio 4's Start the Week](#), along with the Institute's Professor of Palaeoanthropology, [Professor Susana Carvalho](#).

We are delighted that Sir Simon Baron-Cohen has agreed to give a talk on his research at the Meeting Minds Alumni weekend in September as part of the Human Sciences 50th anniversary celebrations.

Professor Theresa Burt de Perera who received the title of Professor of Animal Behaviour in the 2021 Recognition of Distinction exercise. Theresa is a fellow of St John's College and a member of the Department of Zoology. She provides lectures and tutorials for Human Sciences students on animal behaviour.

Professor Susana Carvalho who has been awarded the title of Professor of Paleoanthropology in the University's latest Recognition of Distinction Exercise. Susana is a fellow of St Hugh's College and gives lectures, tutorials and practical classes in Human Evolution for the Human Sciences degree. She is head of the Primate Models for Behavioural Evolution Lab and has been Director of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa since 2015, where an international team of senior researchers is carrying out an unprecedented interdisciplinary approach to understanding hominin origins and adaptation.

Professor Elizabeth Cooksey who was named an Honorary Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AASAS) in 2020 for distinguished contributions to the field of social demography. Elizabeth graduated from St Hilda's College in 1982 and is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology at Ohio State University. Elizabeth will be giving a talk on 'The importance of longitudinal studies for understanding our lives' at the on-line Meeting Minds event on 7 April 2021.

Professor Jennifer Dowd Beam who was made Professor of Demography and Population Health. She is a member of the Department of Sociology where she is Deputy Director of the Leverhulme centre for Demographic Studies. She lectures for the Human Sciences Demography and Population paper.

Dr Ridhi Kashyap, who together with **Professor Melinda Mills**, Director of the Leverhulme Centre for Demographic Science, is a co-investigator in the Connecting Generations Centre, one of six new research centres announced by the Economic and Social Research Council in November as part of a £49 million programme to tackle critical social and economic issues. The Connecting Generations Centre, which is led by Professor Jane Falkingham at Southampton University, aims to strengthen the evidence base on population change and fairness between generations. The centre will explore how issues such as living standards, jobs, housing costs, taxes and benefits, and caring responsibilities are affected by population and generational changes and study inequality – with the aim of improving lives. Ridhi will lead research on digital and computational demography, exploiting new forms of social media data and advanced techniques in machine learning to quantify new ways of studying connections between generations. Ridhi is an Associate Professor of Social Demography in the Department of Sociology and a Fellow of Nuffield College. She convenes the Human Sciences Finals paper on Demography and Population which is also offered as an option to PPE students as Comparative Demographic Systems.

Dr Lambros Malafouris who has been awarded the title of Professor of Cognitive and Anthropological Archaeology. He is a tutorial fellow in Archaeology at Hertford College but was previously at Keble College where he tutored Human Sciences students.

Rebecca Perez who won the 2021 Wadham College Prize in Science and Mathematics for her essay entitled *The Long Legacy of New Diseases: How Anthropology can be a Crucial Tool in the Race to Identify the Next Outbreak*. Rebecca is a third year Human Scientist.

Dr Jessica Renzella who received an Early Career Excellent Teacher Award in the Medical Sciences Division Teaching Awards. Jess is joint convenor of the Human Sciences Health and Disease option which she has taught for a number of years and is an enthusiastic supporter of Human Sciences regularly contributing to our UNIQ summer school. Jess is a lecturer in population health and is part of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Approaches for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention. Her research focuses on how evidence can support public health policies and interventions that aim to improve population diets in Sri Lanka.

Professor Peter Scarborough who has become Professor of Population Health and leads the Diet, Data and Interventions Group in the Nuffield Department of Population Health. He has previously taught on the Health and Disease option.

Daniel Schofield, whose paper, co-authored with William McGrew, Akiko Takahashi and Satoshi Hirata, 'Cumulative culture in nonhumans: overlooked findings from Japanese monkeys' received *the Primates* 2021 Most-Cited Paper Award. Daniel is a D.Phil. student in the Primate Models for Behavioural Evolution Lab and has provided tutorials for Human Sciences students on Human Evolution.

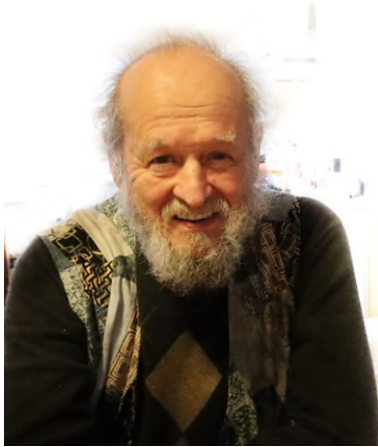
Dr Rachel Tanner who received a 2021 Teaching Excellence Award (Early Career Strand) from the Social Sciences Division in recognition of her outstanding contribution to teaching within the Institute of Human Sciences. Rachel lectures on Immunology for the Human Genetics and Evolution paper and as a college lecturer for Human Sciences at Wadham College she tutors in both genetics and physiology. The Division's Quality Assurance Committee was very impressed to note her "excellent work as acting Director of Studies at Wadham College, developing innovative and engaging pedagogical approaches to teaching the Human Sciences Curriculum as well as offering excellent pastoral support to students". Rachel is also the Institute's Access and Outreach officer and is passionate about ensuring greater parity between students at top universities and within STEM fields. She is a research fellow of Wolfson College and a post-doctoral fellow at the Jenner Institute in the Nuffield Department of Medicine where she researches tuberculosis with a focus on immune correlates of protection and the host immune response to TB Vaccination. Rachel was part of the Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine Trial Group and tested the safety and efficacy of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine which makes the receipt of this award even more impressive. The Social Sciences Teaching Award scheme formally recognises the outstanding contribution to teaching and learning and the academic development of students shown by colleagues across the Division.

Rachel also won the European category of the Global 3Rs Award 2021 for her paper on 'A non-human primate *in vitro* functional assay for the early evaluation of TB vaccine candidates' which recognises significant innovative contributions towards the 3Rs (the Refinement, Replacement or Reduction) of animal use to advance ethical science.

Remembering Piers Nye (1946 –2021)

It was with much sadness that the Institute learnt of the death of Piers Nye in December 2021. Piers had been a long-time Institute member and, until recently, had convened, taught and examined the Physiology part of the Human Sciences degree with his lectures covering altitude, exercise

physiology, the kidney and mass transport. He had read Agriculture at Pembroke College Oxford, moving to the University of California Davis to complete a doctorate in Physiology where he was received the Carlson Prize (the top prize for a Physiology graduate student at Davis awarded to the student with the most promise of excellence in teaching and research).



Piers Nye (photo by Oscar Nye)

He returned to Oxford, which was to be his home for over 40 years, becoming a college lecturer in Physiology at Balliol College and then a University Lecturer in Physiology and Tutorial Fellow in Physiological Sciences at Balliol College. In 2015 he was the recipient of a Teaching Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award from the University of Oxford for his 'high quality and sustained commitment to education demonstrated throughout his career' (having previously been awarded a teaching excellence award from the Medical Sciences Division in 2007).

Piers' commitment to the Human Sciences course continued during his retirement and he put huge amounts of effort into producing 'the best' exam questions and even more into providing extremely detailed examiner's reports to try to assist future cohorts of students. Piers was also a pioneering champion for increasing access, contributing to widening participation events, such as UNIQ for Human Sciences and the wider university.

He was incredibly generous in giving his time to students and others in the Institute. He followed the progress of his former students with pride – the wonderful talk by Human Sciences alum, Katrina Lythgoe on 'The War on Viruses' at an alumni weekend a few years ago was on Piers' recommendation, having kept up with her career.

The Institute is fortunate to have had the support and dedication of Piers who is greatly missed. A celebration of Piers' life will be held in Balliol in 2023.

Remembering Iain Morley (1975–2021)

It was with much sorrow that the Institute learnt of the death of Dr Iain Morley from cancer in February 2021. Iain obtained his doctorate in Archaeology and Anthropology at Trinity Hall Cambridge before coming to Oxford, initially as a fellow and tutor in Human Sciences and in Archaeology and Anthropology at Keble College. During this time Iain provided lectures on Human Evolution for Human Sciences for both Prelims and Finals which were well received by the students, with one describing them as "the best lectures of the course." He later became a fellow and tutor in Human Sciences, and Archaeology and Anthropology, at St Hugh's College. His enthusiasm for teaching shone through in his lectures and tutorials. For several years Iain had an office in the Pauling Centre bringing his inimitable sense of style to the building. He served as Pro-Proctor to the university in 2015-2016. Subsequently Iain was appointed as Academic Co-ordinator for the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography where he continued his involvement with Human Sciences in a more administrative capacity, co-ordinating the UNIQ Summer School and helping to draft the exam conventions and guidance for Human Sciences tutors as well as remaining involved in



college admissions interviews. He continued to pursue his research in Palaeoanthropology, Human Evolution and Palaeolithic archaeology. His particular area of expertise was in the archaeology of music ritual and religious behaviours and their evolutionary behaviour. He was the author of *The Prehistory of Music* and gave a talk on Music and its Evolutionary Origins at the 2011 Human Sciences Symposium on The Musical Brain. Iain is much missed by his colleagues, friends and students.

Careers Events

The Institute held two very successful on-line careers events this year in response to student demand. The first took place early in Hilary Term when alumni who had pursued a variety of career paths joined us to talk about their journeys after Human Sciences. The careers included wildlife conservation, land management, natural history documentary making, media and film, the civil service, medicine, health research, genetic counselling, international development and business anthropology and qualitative research. The on-line format worked well enabling more alumni to join from different parts of the world. Another on-line event was held later in the year in Michaelmas Term where we were joined by alumni working in the civil service, for start-ups, in social work management consulting, animal behaviour, charity work, international human rights, healthcare consulting, medical communication, advertising, fundraising and medicine who shared their experiences and insights on work after graduating. One theme that ran through all the contributions was our alumni's enthusiasm for Human Sciences and how their experience of the course, and grounding in interdisciplinary thinking, had proved helpful to them in their future careers. We are grateful to everyone who took part in the careers events and I know the students found them useful. If any alumni would like to take part in a future careers event please e-mail sarah-jane.white@anthro.ox.ac.uk

Meeting Minds Alumni Events

Due to the on-going pandemic the University's alumni events in 2021 remained on-line. Human Sciences was delighted to take part in both the April and September Meeting Minds Sessions. In April 2021, Emma Cohen, Associate Professor of Cognitive Anthropology and Director of Studies for Human Sciences at Wadham College; Rachel Tanner, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Jenner Institute, Nuffield Department of Medicine and Human Sciences lecturer at Wadham College; and Thomas Püschel, a postdoctoral research fellow and Leverhulme early career fellow within the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, discussed 'How humans work' from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. At the September event, Dr Caroline Phillips, Departmental Lecturer in Paleanthropology gave a stimulating talk on 'Diary of Chimpanzee: Diet and Modelling'. Both sessions were well attended by Human Sciences and other alumni. It was also wonderful to see some of our alumni (and others) who called into the on-line booths for a chat.

We are delighted to be hosting two events in the programme for Meeting Minds from 6-8 April 2022. On Thursday 7 April at 12.30pm, Elizabeth Cooksey, Human Sciences alumna and Professor Emeritus of the Ohio State University, will speak about Generations Past and Future: The Role of Longitudinal Cohort Studies for Understanding Our Lives'. Drawing on her own work on the American National Longitudinal Survey to illustrate the importance of longitudinal data for our understanding of how lives unfold and the importance of time, place and agency and focusing on

three ongoing cohorts, Elizabeth will highlight key findings and discuss 21st century data collection challenges.

On Friday 8 April at 2pm, Dr Adam Ritchie of the Jenner Institute and Human Sciences lecturer at St Catherine's College, and Dr Teresa Street, Vice-Chair of the Institute of Human Sciences and Senior Post-Doc Lab Scientist in the Nuffield Department of Medicine, will discuss how Human Scientists responded to the pandemic. By 2022 more doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid vaccine have been distributed than any other, with most going to low- and middle-income countries. Adam will discuss how having a vaccine that works is only part of the challenge and how Oxford made sure this vaccine would get to those that needed it. Teresa will discuss both the involvement of Modernising Medical Microbiology in the early UK response to the global pandemic and its later involvement in the implementation of SARS-CoV-2 genome sequencing for routine use in Oxford University Hospitals.

There will also be an opportunity to chat informally with Professor David Gellner, head of the Institute, on Thursday 7 April from 3pm to 4pm.

You can register for Meeting Minds Global in April 2022 [here](#).

The Alumni Weekend from 16–18 September 2022 is planned to be in-person in Oxford and, as mentioned earlier, we will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Human Sciences programme. Amongst the main speakers will be our esteemed alumnus, Professor Sir Simon Baron Cohen, Director of the Autism Research Centre at the University of Cambridge and the Institute's Professor of Palaeoanthropology, Susana Carvalho. We will also be having a picnic in the park at lunch-time on Saturday 17th September and several round-table discussions featuring prominent alumni in the afternoon followed by a drinks reception. The celebrations will culminate in a dinner at Wadham College on Saturday evening. We hope many of our alumni will be able to join us for all or part of the weekend. Please look out for an e-mail which will shortly be circulated with details of how to book a place for the dinner.

The Early Years

There isn't a day that I don't celebrate having undertaken the Human Sciences degree. I was one of the lucky four in the first full intake – along with Dougal Jeffries, Malcolm Chapman and Martin Roberts. Throughout my life since university I have used everything I learned – some of it specific knowledge but often just the reminder to consider, the biological, the population, the sociological and the psychological perspectives that underlie our behaviours.

I was actually already at the university and doing PPE when I first heard about proposals for the degree. I was so hoping it would proceed and I could transfer. I went along to the Sheldonian to watch the dons' cliff-edge vote. I felt the degree called to me – who had stopped science at the age of 14 so I could do extra Greek and Latin at my socially aspiring grammar school – where the classics department was as big as the entire science staff – we knew it was ridiculous even then.

So from PPE, I went from discussing whether a table is alive in my philosophy tutorial (I joke you not) to dissecting frogs – which were definitely not alive even before dissection. As there were only four of us – I think in 4 different colleges – we went round as a little band. We spent a fair amount of time in the Zoology department, as that was where the first secretary, Joyce Allard was based and the department had a good place for students to sit and have a coffee.

There seemed to be no one academic staff member responsible for the degree. It was not obvious to us that anyone was taking any decisions – for all I know that may still be true – but we had our academic supporters and there were some positive as well as odd consequences of this seeming neglect. For example, just before prelims, Professor John Pringle a most distinguished zoologist cared about the degree and concluded we had not had enough biology and so called us in for a lecture on the eye. Two of us showed up and he lectured as though it was a packed lecture hall of hundreds as we sat round a desk with him. I just looked up his background and maybe his passion for the holistic theme of the degree was inspired by his war-time service, as a glider pilot and preparing counter electronic activity for the D- Day landings.

I totally showed myself up at a tutorial with Edwin Ardener – an anthropologist of that era – four of us there with him and a hot room. I went out for the count and there was no place to hide. Whilst we had many diverse lectures and we were often the add-on to other departments, there were lectures exclusively for us. The statistics lectures stay in my mind because a very odd, humourless person spent weeks discussing observations of frequency of sexual intimacy. One was left wondering how he had gathered his data and whether that is why he looked so seedy.

Some of the lecturers seemed to think we were just ‘fun guys’ – perhaps not to be taken seriously. The geography tutor for us was John Patten who was to go on to become a Cabinet Minister – secretary of state for education to be exact. Malcolm used to bring his home brewed nettle wine to tutorials. By the end of the hour we were all smashed whilst John spent his entire time imitating eccentric members of the university.

There were others – like the late Mike Cullen who went to every lecture in every department we were supposed to attend – to ensure that we were being offered a good education. Professor Marian Dawkins was our young tutor for Animal Behaviour and is as much an enthusiast for the degree as she was then. Because there was no formal place to ‘bring it all together’, the four of us took it upon ourselves to invite guest speakers to do that. I persuaded Desmond Morris, author of ‘the Naked Ape’ and a figure of much jealousy because he had made lots of money and had a high television profile, to give his first lecture at the university in years – on Art in primates, as part of our seminar series. One day I was walking past the office of the remarkable Professor Niko Tinbergen who no-one seemed to be paying much attention to – because he was retired. I knocked on the door and asked if he could talk me through his and Konrad Lorenz’s ideas about ‘drive’ and ‘instinct’ in animals. Before I knew it I was given a series of tutorials by him. I was probably his last student at the university. I heard about his early fieldwork amongst the Eskimos in the 1920s, his time as a prisoner in a concentration camp and his views on childhood autism – a fascination of mine. He gave me a reference for my first job – working with autistic children in Chicago. He was a remarkable humanist who so richly deserved the Nobel prize he got. He gave £1,000 of his prize to the then newly formed Human Sciences library.

The degree was, and I understand is still, controversial because it wasn’t a defined discipline. I rather thought that overlooked the nature of many of the degrees, the often louche atmosphere at the university or for that matter the role universities might have in encouraging thinking and challenging established wisdom.

As we face the COVID pandemic, politicians around the world battle to consider the range of perspectives to problem tackling that the degree had identified as being so essential. The novelist C. P. Snow, whose lecture and essay, the Two Cultures, had identified the gap between the sciences and arts and warned of the dangers of having scientifically illiterate politicians and senior civil

servants, was the inspiration for the degree. The absence of a Human Sciences multi-dimensional approach threatens the existence of our species and indeed our entire planet.

David Lerner (St Edmund Hall, 1973)

2021 Prizes

The 2021 Bob Hiorns Prize for the best performance in the Final Honour School of Human Sciences was awarded to Imogen Hequet of Hertford College. Imogen, who is now studying for an MSc in Health Data Analytics and Machine Learning at Imperial College, London, writes:



“I am extremely grateful to have been awarded the Bob Hiorns memorial prize. I’ve had a brilliant time studying Human Sciences. The course was fascinating, challenging, and generally great fun, and this is all thanks to the fantastic tutors, students, and academic staff who make it happen. Human Sciences is the first time that having broad academic interests has felt like a strength rather than a weakness. I loved constantly deep diving into new topics; I always joked that my favourite module was whichever one we

were currently doing. In Human Sciences, not only do we do the best parts of everyone else’s degrees, our tutors encourage us to explore the neglected areas at their intersections, most of which are extremely timely and topical in nature. Human Sciences was a huge part of what made my time at Oxford so special, even during a pandemic. I am excited to see what everyone does next, and I will no doubt continue to sing the praises of Humsci to anyone who asks me about it.”

The Wilma Crowther Prize for the best dissertation was awarded to Hampton Gaddy for his dissertation on ‘Re-estimating the Global Death Toll of the Spanish Influenza Pandemic’. Hampton is studying for an MPhil in Sociology and Demography at Nuffield College here in Oxford.

The AstraZeneca Covid-19 Vaccine

Two Human Sciences Institute members, Lecturers Dr Adam Ritchie (St Catherine’s College) and Dr Rachel Tanner (Wadham College), have been involved in the development of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. With over 2.5 billion doses distributed (mostly in low- and middle-income countries) and estimates of over 1 million lives saved by this one vaccine, they’ve contributed to global health at a time of crisis that drew not only on their scientific training but the interdisciplinary nature of being a Human Scientist.

Adam was part of the team focused on the question of how to manufacture the billions of doses of this vaccine that would be needed should it work. Normally this would only be considered after clinical trials, but given the emerging pandemic it was clear that this process needed to start immediately. As well as the science of how to scale up a process that could make hundreds of doses in the lab to millions in factories, he was involved in getting that process shared with manufacturers across the globe, ensuring that it wasn’t only made in wealthy, Western countries. Adam notes, “This ‘distributed manufacturing’ approach has done more for fairer global distribution of vaccines

than anything done by the other Western vaccine manufacturers, and it will probably be the single most important thing I ever do in my career.”

In March 2020, as the programme was scaling up and each day involved 14+ hours of work, it was in the Human Sciences alumni network that Adam found salvation. His former student, Iona Tarbet,



Dr Adam Ritchie in the Jenner Institute. Photo by John Cairns

stepped in to join the team managing this programme, and spent the rest of 2020 and 2021 working with Adam and colleagues on the manufacturing programme. Adam says the most unusual moment for him and Iona was when they drove the vaccine and the cells needed to grow it to collaborators in Portsmouth in March 2020: “With the country in lockdown, and armed with letters from the University outlining we were on pandemic-related business, our

greatest fear was being stopped by police and delayed, which could have resulted in the death of the cells. Luckily that didn’t happen, and the first ever large-scale manufacturing runs were completed, showing the vaccine could be made efficiently and economically”.

Alongside, Rachel was part of a laboratory team conducting immunology assays to measure the kinetic and specificity of T-cell responses in the volunteers following vaccination. Rachel recalls, “At the time I was acting Director of Studies for Human Sciences at Wadham, so I took late shifts in the lab which meant I could teach/mark essays and keep up with my ‘normal’ research (on TB vaccines) during the day, and then do a stint on the Covid vaccine trials in the evenings – often until midnight or 1am. It was pretty intense as we were processing unprecedented numbers of samples requiring total and unwavering focus, but everyone understood the gravity of the situation and the importance and urgency of the work. We also had overwhelming support from the public with cards and letters coming in every day, as well as donations of food and even beauty products!”



Dr Rachel Tanner

“The Wadham HumSci’s are such a tight-knit group, we really navigated the early days together and supported each other through the uncertainty and disruption. A pandemic demands a truly interdisciplinary response and understanding, and being an immunologist and involved in the research effort meant that we could have many interesting discussions in seminars and tutes.”

This is not the first time Adam and Rachel have worked together. In 2008-2010 they worked together on HIV immunology, but have stayed in touch through their shared interest in vaccines and teaching for Human Sciences. Little did they know they'd have the chance to work together a decade later on something as important as a Covid-19 vaccine for the world.

Further reading

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2021-11-15-oxford-vaccine-reaches-two-billion-dose-milestone>

<https://500womenscientists.org/updates/2020/9/11/women-scientists-on-the-frontline-of-a-covid-19-vaccine>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/bit.27945>

<https://portlandpress.com/biochemist/article/43/4/8/229263/Making-THE-vaccine>

Adam will be speaking at the Meeting Minds event on 8 April 2022 (see above for details of how to register).

The Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa

Where did we come from? How did we become what we are today? What factors contributed towards our evolutionary success? These questions are at the forefront of human origins research. Their answers are key to uncovering missing pieces in the puzzle of human evolution, answers which an interdisciplinary team of international researchers led by the Institute's Professor Susana



Paleo-Primate Project, Gorongosa. Photo by Paleo-Primate Project

Carvalho are hoping to shed light on through fieldwork in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique as part of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa.

Founded by Professor Carvalho in 2016, the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa brings together distinguished scholars from the fields of geology, speleology, palaeontology, palaeobotany, archaeology, primatology, genetics and conservation biology with the aim of elucidating our understanding of primate (and in particular, human) evolution, both past and present, through research carried out in

Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique. Located in central Mozambique, in a relatively unexplored region of southeast Africa, Gorongosa National Park represents an auspicious site for tackling the overarching questions around the evolution of our species. Its unique position and ecology allow researchers from traditionally separate fields to work side-by-side using diverse methods to collect both modern and prehistoric data, all of which will be necessary to paint a clearer picture of what drove our evolution in the past.

Geographically speaking, Gorongosa National Park lies at a very strategic location within Africa which holds great promise for uncovering fossilised evidence of primate and perhaps also human evolution. Situated at the base of the East African Rift System, an active continental rift zone running from Ethiopia to Mozambique which has yielded some of the most well-known discoveries of fossil hominins (the group which comprises our own species, *Homo sapiens*, our direct ancestors, and extinct close relatives), between the so called “Cradle of Humanity” in eastern Africa and the self-proclaimed “Cradle of Humankind” in South Africa from which further hominin finds of great significance have been made, Gorongosa National Park represents the last unstudied link in the East African Rift System. Gorongosa’s unique location makes it a logical place to search for evidence of our earliest human ancestors. Already the team have identified several caves and promising open air fossil sites in Gorongosa National Park and begun excavations, so far yielding mammalian fossils predating the earliest hominin fossil evidence on record currently placed at approximately 7 million years ago. The hunt is on for fossil primates, including hominins, among these ancient sediments in what may be a multi-decade exploration and research endeavour yielding new insights about when and how our earliest human ancestors evolved.

In terms of its biodiversity and ecology, Gorongosa National Park also presents an ideal setting for studying what the environments in which our ancestors lived and evolved would have been like, so far as is possible using modern analogues. In common with reconstructions of past environments associated with hominin fossils, Gorongosa National Park is a complex mosaic habitat, encompassing dynamic areas of woodland, forest, savanna, grassland and swamp teeming with life, vegetation, and mammalian fauna similar to those which were likely found in the environments of human evolution. Among the animals found living in Gorongosa today are five species of non-human primates, including an estimated 219 troops of free-ranging baboons (a particularly high-density for the 4000 km² area of the Park, likely sustained by the favourable environment and seemingly low predation levels as a result of historic warfare and hunting of large mammals during the Mozambican Civil War from 1977 through to 1992). Among our closest living relatives and adapted to living and thriving in complex environments, primates such as baboons offer a fascinating insight into how our ancestors may have lived and behaved millions of years ago, providing a useful model for reconstructing past human behavioural evolution. Thus, another powerful branch of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa focuses on the study of these modern primates, their behaviour, genetics, and morphology. By observing baboons and their behavioural adaptations to the Gorongosa National Park ecology, researchers hope to throw light on how some of our own human ancestors would have lived, the ways they utilised resources in the landscape, the types of threats they faced and the ways in which they would have overcome them to succeed in similar environments. With the support of a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship, Professor Carvalho’s new study is tracking bipedalism and predation among baboons in Gorongosa National Park to inform our understanding of how predator interactions influenced early human



Students working in Oxford-Gorongosa Paleo-Primate Field School. Photo by Paleo Primate Project

behaviour relative to bipedalism and carnivory, complementing ongoing primatological work led by researchers of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa and illuminating yet another branch of human evolution.

From its onset, the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa has recognised the importance of nurturing mentorship opportunities for the next generation of researchers. In 2018, in collaboration with Gorongosa National Park and the University of Oxford, Professor Carvalho officially launched the Oxford-Gorongosa Paleo-Primate Field School. A uniquely interdisciplinary experience, the field school draws upon the expertise of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa team members who provide students with specialist training in primatology, palaeoanthropology, archaeology, geology, speleology and ecology, all within the ecologically rich and aesthetically breath-taking setting of Gorongosa National Park. Traditionally, opportunities to gain experience in these disciplines are notoriously expensive and hard to come by, but the Oxford-Gorongosa Paleo-Primate Field School aims to be as accessible as is possible: there are no tuition fees and assistance is available to



Paleo-Primate Project, Gorongosa. Photo by Paleo Primate Project

students applying for small grants to cover associated travel and living expenses. Half of the students selected each year are from Mozambique, including students from the local area and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique's capital city. To date, over 20 students from Mozambique have been mentored by members of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa, with a number now pursuing further study in associated disciplines and contributing valuable research towards the overarching goals of the Project. The remainder of the cohort is comprised of students from the University of Oxford studying on related degree programmes

including the Human Sciences BA, Archaeology and Anthropology BA, and Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology MSc and the Biology BA. Field school students have the option to develop and conduct their own independent research projects in the Park, collecting original data which may form the basis of their undergraduate or postgraduate dissertations. Past dissertation projects have included studies of object manipulation and play behaviour among the Gorongosa baboons, carcass taphonomy and ethology on the Gorongosa floodplains, and the social dimension of bipedal behaviour in primates and its implications for human evolution. The results of these projects have added to a growing body of research into the ecology of Gorongosa National Park and behaviour of the species that inhabit it which are helping to inform future research directions of the Project.

Susana Carvalho is a Professor in Palaeoanthropology and Fellow of St Hugh's College. Within the Institute of Human Sciences, she leads the Primate Models for Behavioural Evolution Lab. Several of the Lab's graduate students conduct research in Gorongosa National Park as part of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa, with some projects falling under the primatology umbrella, involving data collection on baboon movement patterns and predatory behaviour through a combination of direct observation and digital methods including the use of GPS collars and camera trap footage,

whilst others take a more palaeontological approach to tackling questions concerning human evolution,

Ultimately, it is through this integrated approach – focusing on studies of both modern and fossil primates among the exceptionally biodiverse and geologically promising site of Gorongosa National Park, and led by an international team of dedicated scholars from all career stages – that the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa can provide a clearer sense of how our ancestors lived, interacted, and migrated across Africa.

Alongside its research activities, the Primate Models for Behavioural Evolution Lab runs a popular weekly seminar series during term time known as *Primate Conversations* which is co-organised by Professor Carvalho's graduate students and sponsored by St Hugh's College. Each term, *Primate Conversations* hosts expert speakers focusing on key research and outreach engagement within the fields of primatology, palaeoanthropology and conservation. Previously an Oxford-based seminar series taking place within the Primate Models for Behavioural Evolution Lab along Banbury Road, the seminars have now moved online, with presentations streamed virtually over YouTube and reaching a large, global audience who can engage in the discussion through the submission of live questions and catch up on or rewatch talks of interest at a time that is convenient for them. Since the inception of *Primate Conversations*, a key aim has been to create an open, accessible, and inclusive environment that fosters diversity in topics, speakers, participation, organisers, moderators, and hosts. With the move to online streaming, *Primate Conversations* has been able to host speakers of all career stages from all around the globe, providing a valuable resource for primatology and human evolution enthusiasts worldwide. The recent series of talks are available to watch through the Primate Models for Behavioural Evolution Lab channel on YouTube and the seminar series will be back next term with a fresh line-up of speakers. You can find out more about the Paleo Primate Project in the [media and educational videos created by members of the lab](#).

Professor Susana Carvalho will be talking about her research in Gorongosa as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations at the Meeting Minds alumni weekend in September.

Professor Susana Carvalho and Megan Beardmore- Herd

Yoga Bodies and Yoga Minds

Alison Shaw and her colleague Esra Kaytaz co-edited a special issue of *Anthropology and Medicine* (2021, Vol 28 Issue 3) on yoga as a health practice. The issue, titled 'Yoga Bodies, Yoga Minds: Contextualising the Health Discourses and Practices of Modern Postural Yoga', explores yoga's recent, rapid, global expansion as a health and wellness practice. Modern postural yoga emerged as a contemporary practice for health and wellbeing over the past approximately 100-150 years through the interactive effects of the international physical culture movement, Hindu nationalism, gender, naturopathy, and science. Today, yoga's myriad forms offer practitioners a combination of postural work, breathing, and meditative techniques with the overall aim of improving health, strength, fitness, and a sense of wellbeing. Drawing on research in India, Europe, North America, Japan, and online spaces, the issue examines some of the contexts and localities where yoga is practised, exploring who takes it up, what motivates them to do so, and how yoga is understood to influence health and wellbeing. The introduction to the issue provides a background and framework to understanding yoga's current global popularity as a practice for health and wellbeing. The six original articles then take forward the idea of yoga as an evolving set of practices and discourses with the capacity to convey ideas about health and wellbeing.

Table of Contents:

Alison Shaw & Esra S. Kaytaz [*Yoga bodies, yoga minds: contextualising the health discourses and practices of modern postural yoga*](#)

Beatrix Hauser [*Health imaginary of postural yoga*](#).

Alison Shaw [*'A tool to help me through the darkness': suffering and healing among teacher-practitioners of Ashtanga yoga*](#)

Krzysztof Bierski [*A wellbeing skill: moving attentively in hospital yoga practice*](#)

Cassandre Campeau-Bouthillier [*Bodies in yoga: tangled discourses in Canadian studios*](#)

Mahé Ben Hamed [*Healing myths, yoga styles and social bodies: socio-logics of yoga as a health practice in the socially stratified city of Marseille*](#)

Tess Bird [*Being alone together: yoga, bodywork, and intimate sociality in American households*](#)

Graduate News

1973

For **Lynne Jones** (Lady Margaret Hall), 2021 was almost as strange as 2020. Her online humanitarian life continued. She started the year teaching child mental health to social workers working with Venezuelan refugees in Peru and early child development to refugee adolescent mothers in the same country, all from her desk in Cornwall. The annual [Mental Health in Complex Emergencies Course](#) at Fordham University, for which Lynne is a course director, was a three-month online course for the second year running, this time with almost 100 students from across the world. It will be running again next year. Lynne was glad to go back into the field in October to work with families and children on the move, stuck on the Bosnian border. The majority were Afghan with many heart-breaking stories. Some families have been travelling for 5 years and some children have never had a home to call their own. One of the projects Lynne does is to give children the opportunity to tell their own stories through words and pictures. Many of these stories can be found here in this book, [the Migrant Diaries](#) along with her own account of working in the migrant crises in various countries. This was published by the Refuge Press in the Spring of this year. The children's stories and pictures can also be found [here](#). In between times throughout this year Lynne has been an active supporter of Doctors for Extinction Rebellion along with many other medical friends. The Royal College of Psychiatrists invited her to speak at their [fringe event at COP](#) where she was able to connect the climate crisis to the experience of forced displacement. She is thankful again for the interdisciplinary perspective that her Human Science background has provided in all these situations.

1990

Hannah Bradby (Wadham) has a new co-authored book out - [Exploring Welfare Bricolage in Europe's Superdiverse Neighbourhoods](#) – reporting on a major interdisciplinary, international, multimethod study of healthcare access and provision across four European settings.

1997

Ed Cookson (Magdalen) is a director at Sarnier International Ltd, one of the UK's leading museum and visitor attraction designers. Sarnier's exhibitions and experiences have immersed audiences in subjects including history, science, nature, culture, arts, and social sciences – a variety for which his Human Sciences degree prepped him well. Ed's projects have taken him from pre-history and early human evolution to possible futures including AI, Cloning and Designer Lifeforms via Vikings & Saxons, Battles & Sieges, Crime & Punishment, and Polar Exploration. His company is known for using storytelling and multi-sensory technology to engage visitors of all ages and backgrounds, and his attractions have received numerous plaudits including two Thea Awards (the most prestigious awards in the attractions industry). Please feel free to connect at [linkedin.com/in/edcookson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/edcookson) or twitter.com/edcookson.

2013

Leena Lee (St John's) has been working in private equity for the last few years and recently started a new role in a similar space. Although working in finance, she is still very much in touch with her HumSci roots.

2015

Freya Price (St Hugh's) continues to enjoy living with the intriguing explorations delved into in Human Sciences. She works part-time as the Woodland Carbon Code officer for Coed Cymru, a Welsh woodland creation and management organisation. The benefits and risks of the ecosystems service approach is something she lives and works with in creating carbon credits from new woodlands with farmers. The aim is to create and maintain woodlands that bring strong benefits to people and other species. Freya lives in Machynlleth, west Wales, the community in which she was raised and feels very lucky to be a part of. Her other part-time work is as the Dyfi Biosphere Climate Officer. This role works closely with the local community to bring about multi-solving climate action. For example, a shared e-bike scheme; and a thermal imaging camera people can borrow to see where heat is escaping from their home. Freya's MSc in Sustainability and Adaptation Planning also had a local focus, with the dissertation '[Is current community resilience sufficient to ensure inclusive and empowering climate adaptation? A case study of Machynlleth, Wales](#)'. Freya continues to be engaged in activism, community work, and trying to live well in our complex human and more-than-human world.

2020

Louis Torracinta (Wadham) has had an article published in a special edition of the journal *Vaccines on Vaccine Hesitancy and Child immunizations: Rationales, Issues and Knowledge Gaps*. The article, entitled '[MMR Vaccine Attitude and Uptake Research in the United Kingdom: A Critical Review](#)' is based on his work for his Human Sciences dissertation submitted in 2020 and for which Louis was awarded the Wilma Crowther Prize for the best dissertation. Louis' dissertation was supervised by Dr Rachel Tanner of the Institute of Human Sciences and Jenner Institute and lecturer in Human Sciences for Wadham College. After graduating Louis completed a Masters in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

2021 Publications by Members of the Institute of Human Sciences

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