



# CONNECTIONS

OxRSS provides Oxford research staff with a voice and networking opportunities

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## CONNECT WITH US

Receive up to date information on staff events! Sign up to the staff list by sending a blank email to our [mailing list](mailto:committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk) or follow us on social media.

✉ [committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk](mailto:committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk)

 @ResStaffOxford

 [OxRSS Connections](#)

## HOUSING FOR UNIVERSITY STAFF

The University has a growing concern that the affordability of housing in Oxford has become a real constraint on our ability to attract and retain the staff we need to deliver our mission – world-leading research and teaching. This problem is probably most acute with our post-doctoral research staff, many of whom are committed to research projects, which require them to work long and sometimes irregular hours. Travelling long distances into Oxford is not an attractive proposition. Earnings of between £30-£40,000 pa are typical, yet it is difficult to find secure, satisfactory accommodation that does not absorb a significant chunk of take-home pay.

The University is in dialogue with the City Council about this issue. The only real long-term solution is to build more accommodation within striking distance of our research activity, i.e., within or close to the city boundary. This dialogue is still at an early stage but a key issue is securing agreement from the City Council to relax their 50% 'affordable housing' requirements on new developments and enable the University to ring-fence some of this development for its own 'key' staff, post-doctoral researchers.

There will be no rapid solution to the current situation, but several members of the OxRSS voice team are on the working group with the University to get the project off the ground and making sure researchers' needs are met.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 6 July, OxRSS Annual General Meeting and social, 5 pm start
- 12 July, St John's College dinner
- 27 July, Monthly social
- 9 Aug, Summer dinner and boat trip (tbc)
- 19 Aug, Picnic and games in University Parks (tbc)
- Sept, Outdoor escape games (tbc)
- Sept, TAP brewery tap (tbc)
- 28 Sept, Monthly social
- 29 Sept, Curiosity Carnival/ European Researcher's Night

## NEWS FROM YOUR VOICE REPRESENTATIVES

OxRSS voice representatives met on 24 April 2017 to discuss housing for staff members, draft objectives of OxRSS, and the University's gender equality action plan for the Silver Athena Swan.

Each division is very active in organising relevant

training workshops for staff that can be found on their websites.

If you are interested in becoming an OxRSS Voice representative, please contact Anjali Shah at [anjali.shah@ndorms.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anjali.shah@ndorms.ox.ac.uk)

## DRAFT OBJECTIVES OF OXRSS

1. To increase awareness of OxRSS among staff members.
2. To increase OxRSS representation on University and divisional committees, and to maintain links with divisional and departmental research staff groups and societies.
3. To advocate for mandatory training for all members of staff on interview panels, e.g., the online 'Implicit Bias' course.
4. To support the creation of a staff induction event that is integrated between both the University and divisions.
5. To advocate for a policy that states that all research staff are entitled to a minimum of 10 days per year for the purpose of attending conferences, training and development events or for 'on-the-job training'.
6. To increase research staff awareness of the value of a Personal Development Review meeting, and to empower and inform them to make the most out of the process (e.g., request opportunities for mentoring, teaching, training, conferences, and college affiliations).
7. To encourage departments to provide suitable support for managers to engage in the Personal Development Review process meaningfully and in a timely way.
8. To lobby for systematic management training for Principal Investigators, and that such training is offered to staff who unofficially supervise other staff and students.
9. To lobby for more transparent information provided on career development and on criteria for promotions.
10. To work with divisions and departments to ensure more support and training are available to research staff who would like to apply for research grants.
11. To enable OxRSS Voice representatives to engage in and to ensure links between Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter work at the University, divisional, and departmental levels.
12. To support an event or events on the topic of 'The impact of Brexit on Research'.

If you have any comments or suggestions for these objectives, please attend the OxRSS Annual General Meeting on 6 July where they will be discussed and voted on. Or, please send comments to Anjali Shah: [Anjali.shah@ndorms.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Anjali.shah@ndorms.ox.ac.uk).

## FEATURED EVENTS

### Easter Egg Hunt with Oxford Pastorate

By Lorraine Mumtaz

On the afternoon of March 20th, researchers and their families gathered at the chapel at Harris Manchester. During the first part of the event, Jonathan Brant from the Oxford Pastorate held an Easter service, aimed mainly at the children by offering them chances to interact during parts of the story. Children in the audience were asked questions, and many happily participated. After this there was an Easter egg hunt on the College grounds, and fortunately, the sun shone while they excitedly ran around finding the clues we had left. They all managed to find the clues and collected a chocolate prize. Jonathan Brant was pleased with the event and is very happy to collaborate with OxRSS in running similar events in the future, so watch out for a Christmas event with mince pies and mulled wine!



### Trinity College Dinner

By Lorraine Mumtaz



The dinner at Trinity College on March 23rd was a truly enjoyable event. Everyone first congregated in the cellar bar where sparkling wine and soft drinks were served before entering the dining hall.

During this time there was also a tour of the chapel led by Professor Martin Kemp. The hall looked amazing, with beautifully-laid long tables and lit candles. Surrounding us on the walls was something different. Instead of the usual paintings of old Masters of the College, all the portraits were of women, alumnae, and Fellows from past and present. The photography exhibition *Feminae Trinitatis* is running throughout 2017 for those who would like to see it. After the dinner we went back to the cellar bar for dancing and drinks, as there was a live DJ playing a variety of music that got everyone dancing.

## FEATURED EVENTS CONTINUED

### Escape Room Games

By Lorraine Mumtaz



On a chilly Wednesday evening, we entered the small hallway leading upstairs to where the escape rooms are located in Headington. Not

having experienced this before, some of us were a bit apprehensive and did not know what to expect.

In our teams (2 groups of 5), we were each told the background story behind the room we had to escape from, and what we were supposed to do. Fortunately, we were allowed a little help from the instructor, who typed a few clues that we could then read during the game. In team B we started a little haphazardly, searching everything, but soon found a clue to unlock a padlock, and we were on the way! Everything in the room is potentially a clue, so has to be explored thoroughly; however, it is quite challenging so it is useful to have people with varied expertise. We would definitely recommend it.

### Oxford's May Morning

By Louise Bezuidenhout

On May Morning, fifteen intrepid OxRSS members joined the rest of the city in celebrating the coming spring. Meeting at 5am, they merged with the crowds on Magdalen Bridge to hear the Magdalen College choir serenade the dawn from the tower — a continuation of a 500-year-old tradition of which the College is justifiably proud. After the singing had ended, the town erupted into festivities, with bands, Morris dancers, and various other artists exhibiting all over the centre of town. For some of the OxRSS members, this was their first introduction to

Morris dancing, but hopefully not their last!

After taking in the sights and sounds of the busy May Morning, OxRSS then headed to Folly Bridge to take a Salters Steamers boat to the Perch. The 45-minute boat trip took them along the river towards the peaceful calm of Port Meadow in the sunshine. After a hard-earned breakfast, the ones who could still keep their eyes open tried a couple of local beers at the Perch's bank holiday beer and cider festival. All in all, a busy and delightful day that could be recommended to all!

### Fellowship Application & Interviews Workshop

By Lorraine Mumtaz

Over 60 people attended this workshop on May 18th. As the title implies, it was split into two sessions, with Gill Wells speaking and advising about fellowship applications, and Rachel Bray giving advice about interviews. During the second part Rachel gave everyone a chance to practice in an interview situation. We were put into groups of

3 or 4, and each person had to take the turn of interviewer, interviewee, and observer. All who attended enjoyed both sessions and thought the interactive part was very useful. Having further information about the fellowship application process gave many the chance to think about whether it really is the right path for them.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### Career development, workshops, fairs and personal development

#### [Careers Service](#)

For one-on-one meetings with a Careers Adviser, and workshops and events specific for research staff.

#### [Code of Practice for the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff](#)

The University's commitment to supporting the careers of researchers.

#### [Research staff groups by department](#)

This website contains information on research staff groups in each department.

#### [Oxford Learning Institute](#)

Obtain support for personal and professional development via courses and seminars on management, teaching, and personal development.

#### [Support for researchers](#)

This website contains information on support available to research staff from across the University.

#### [Vitae](#)

The national researcher development organisation.

### Other resources

#### [IT services](#)

For technological and computing assistance

#### [New research staff](#)

This website provides information for research staff who recently joined Oxford.

### Social opportunities

#### [Oxford University Club](#)

Members and staff of the University are welcome to this sports and social club.

#### [Facebook](#)

Like the [OxRSS page](#) for the latest news and events!

#### [OxRSS Email List](#)

To join, please visit [www.oxrss.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxrss.ox.ac.uk) and click the link "Sign up to the Research Staff Mailing List"

## THE OXRSS COMMITTEE



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