

Barnett House News

MICHAELMAS 2014



100 YEARS OF SOCIAL ENQUIRY



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY AND INTERVENTION



Barnett House Centenary Year Reunion Weekend



Message from Head of Department

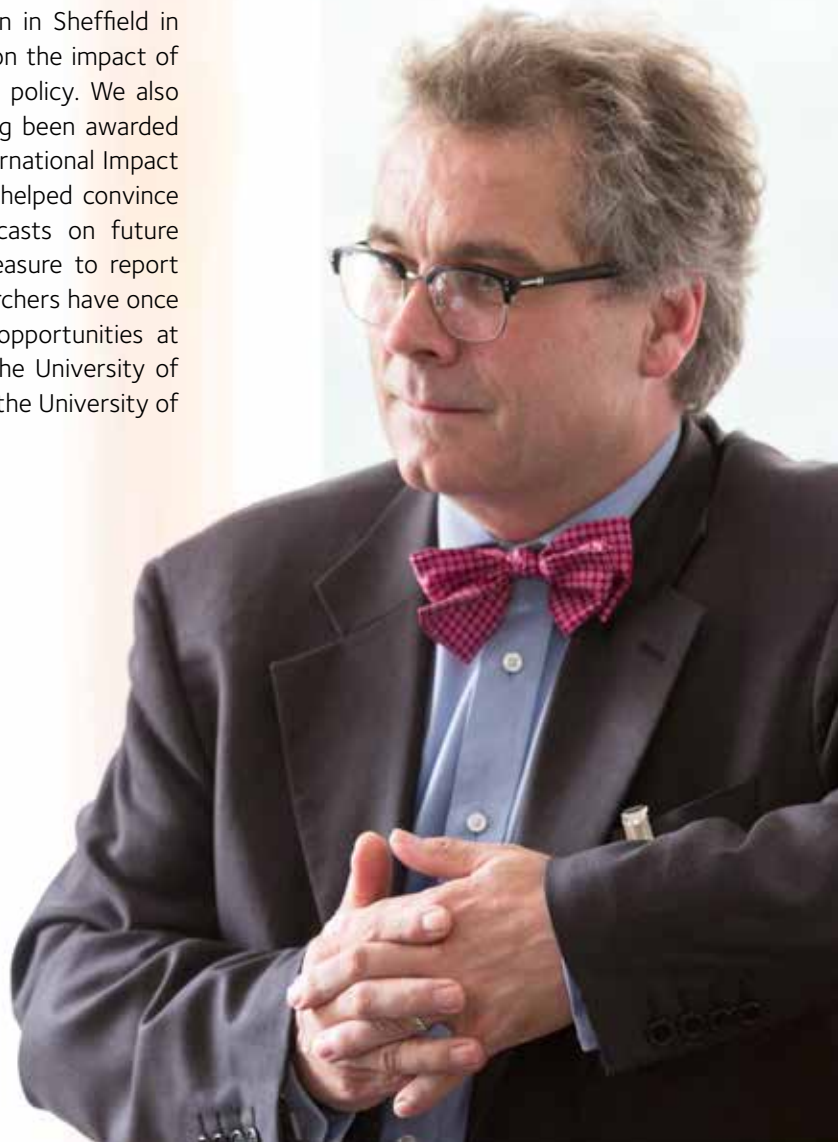
The academic year 2013-14 was very special for DSPI, as Barnett House celebrated its centenary. The inspiring 2013 Sidney Ball Lecture, given by Baroness Professor Ruth Lister and chaired by the Chancellor of Oxford University, Lord Patten of Barnes, formally opened the celebrations of the Centenary year which culminated with the Barnett House Reunion Weekend on 12-13 July 2014. The weekend provided the opportunity to reconnect with former students and staff as well as for members of the department to showcase their work. Starting next year DSPI will link into the regular alumni weekend of Oxford University. Stay connected and please feel free to become a member of the Barnett House Alumni Group on LinkedIn.

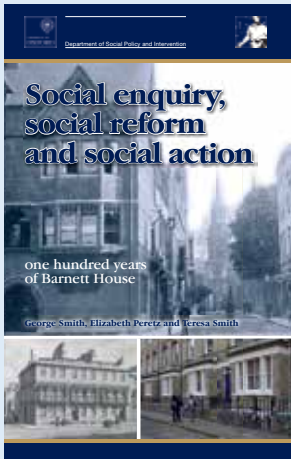
At Barnett House we are proud of all our alumni, but this year we are especially proud of Faraz Shahidi, MPhil student in Comparative Social Policy 2011-13, who was awarded the best Postgraduate Paper Prize at the Annual Meeting of the Social Policy Association in Sheffield in July 2014 for his comparative analysis on the impact of the economic and fiscal crises on social policy. We also congratulate Dr Stuart Basten for having been awarded the ESRC 2nd Prize for Outstanding International Impact for his research into Asian fertility that helped convince the United Nations to revise its forecasts on future population trends. It is also a great pleasure to report that a number of our Early Career Researchers have once again been successful in securing job opportunities at leading research universities, including the University of Lund (Sweden), Sciences Po (Paris), and the University of Manchester as well as here in Oxford.

Colleagues continue to carry out a wide range of research and are highly successful in winning funding. In this context I want to highlight the success of Dr Elaine Chase for securing a major research grant (£800k) from the ESRC for the project *'Becoming adult': Conceptions of futures and wellbeing among young people subject to immigration control in the UK*; and Frances Gardner's award from the NIHR to carry out a two year programme of research on parenting programmes, *How far could widespread dissemination of parenting programmes improve child antisocial behaviour and reduce social inequalities?*

If you have news to share please feel free to contact us. I hope to see you at one of our events.

Martin Seeleib-Kaiser





100 years of Barnett House

The Centenary book, *Social enquiry, social reform and social action: 100 years of Barnett House*, by George Smith, Elizabeth Peretz, and Teresa Smith, was launched at the 2014 alumni weekend, celebrating the department's history over the last 100 years. The book tells the story of Barnett House, which opened in 1914 as a 'civic house' to combine social enquiry, policy debate and social action, and in 1946 became part of the University of Oxford, now the Department of Social Policy and Intervention.

The book is available to buy (£15) through the University's online store (www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk) or by emailing the department: alumni@spi.ox.ac.uk



Sidney Ball Memorial Lecture

The 2014 Sidney Ball Memorial Lecture 2014 will be delivered by Prof Tom Cook, Joan and Sarepta Harrison Chair in Ethics and Justice, Professor of Sociology,

Psychology, Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University. It will be held at 5pm on 20 October 2014 at Rewley House, followed by a drinks reception. Prof Cook will be speaking on *The Major Assumptions of Evidence-Based Policy: Bringing Empirical Evidence to Bear*. Everyone is welcome!

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The Centenary Reunion



The story of Barnett House has been written by the individuals who are part of its heritage. Our July Reunion Weekend was a celebration of those people, a rare occasion for former students and staff to revisit an important part of their past. As the department opened its doors for 'open house', guests were invited to meet current members of the department and discuss new projects, hear the history of Barnett House as an institution, and share the 100th birthday cake with the University's Vice-Chancellor!

The varied group of alumni came from matriculation years starting in the 1940s and 1950s and going up to the 2000s, with degrees in subjects including Social Work, Social Studies, Applied Social Science, Public Administration, Comparative Social Policy, and Evidence-Based Social Intervention. Over the course of the gloriously sunny weekend alumni engaged in conversation and fed their minds with both well-known and new research and discussion.

The Saturday was a celebration of Barnett House past and present. Prof Martin Seeleib-Kaiser, the current Head of Department, opened the weekend with a warm welcome, followed by a talk by George Smith, Elizabeth Peretz and Teresa Smith on the history of the department and the launch of their new book, based on research funded by the Nuffield Foundation, in celebration of the centenary: *Social enquiry, social reform and social action: one hundred years of Barnett House*. Guests then took the microphone to inspire discussion about the department's academic history.

Following lunch, the alumni plus additional friends of Barnett House who came for the open house, had the opportunity to explore more of the work of Barnett House by attending a series of short talks and viewing exhibitions. The talks featured a wide spectrum of cutting-edge research underway at the department, including Dr Stuart Basten on *The normalisation of one-child families in China*; Prof Paul Montgomery on *Sanitary pads for girls' education in Africa*; Prof Mary Daly on *Changing families and policy responses*; Dr G.J. Melendez-Torres on *Resurgent HIV epidemics in UK men who have sex with men*; and Prof Ann Buchanan on *The history of social welfare....where to now?*. In addition, we were treated to a visit from The Rebel Researchers: the final Barnett Fellow, Rys Farthing, is working with young researchers from Toynbee Hall who came and spoke about their research into how young people (aged 11-19) understand politics and express their political agency. The Barnett Fellowship was set up in the 1920s to be jointly managed by trustees appointed by Barnett House Toynbee Hall.

Weekend: a report



- 1 *Teresa Smith, Elizabeth Peretz and George Smith launch the book and talk about the history of Barnett House.*
- 2 *Jonathan Bradshaw gave an after dinner talk.*
- 3 *Rys Farthing, the last Barnett Fellow, and the Rebel Researchers talk about their research.*
- 4 *Magdalena Sepulveda gave the keynote lecture.*
- 5 *John Langdon and Angus MacPherson attended Barnett House in the 1940s and 1950s.*

Elsewhere in the building, there were displays of the wide range of research currently underway in the department, with staff and students working on these projects available to discuss their work. This included research with AIDS-affected children and families in South Africa; a study on the benefits of increased dietary intake of Omega-3 for mental and physical health; a project aiming to create an evidence-based guideline for reporting randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of social and psychological interventions; information about a demography blog developed by researchers in OXPOP, openpop.org, to raise the profile of and facilitate discussion around demographic issues; and a project on the role of education in intergenerational social mobility as well as other work. There were also displays of recent books and Barnett Papers in Social Research published by members of the department. In addition, guests were treated to display material on the history of the department, and artwork by Joe Skinner who designed the department's centenary logo.

The University Vice-Chancellor, Prof Andrew Hamilton, came to Barnett House to share in the celebrations, and prior to the cutting of the 100th birthday cake, we heard speeches from both the VC and Prof AH Halsey, who was Director of Barnett House for nearly 30 years.

The party then moved on to Wadham College for the evening meal, which featured a stirring after-dinner speech

from Professor Jonathan Bradshaw from the University of York and a long-time friend of Barnett House.

On Sunday the mood became more sombre as we considered in more detail issues surrounding poverty and the ongoing need for the work of Barnett House researchers and alumni. The film, *Rich Man, Poor Man* was shown (available through our website), which came out of research into poverty and shame carried out by Prof Robert Walker and Dr Elaine Chase, funded by the ESRC. The film showed interviews with rich and poor families from Pakistan, Uganda, the UK and South Korea. The presence of Tammy, who featured in the UK section of the film, added another dimension to the subsequent discussions. This was followed by the keynote lecture from Magdalena Sepulveda, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, chaired by the Head of the Social Sciences Division, Prof Roger Goodman. Magdalena spoke movingly on her experiences in the UN.

The culmination of the department's 2013-14 Centenary celebrations, which were launched at the 2013 Sidney Ball Memorial Lecture and also featured a programme of special seminars and the first Alumni Lecture (information and podcasts available via our website), the alumni weekend was a resounding success, and it is hoped that it heralds a new tradition for Barnett House reunions.

Sarah Bryant, Communication and Alumni Relations Officer

In pictures: Reunion Weekend

It was inspiring to see so many people at the reunion weekend and wonderful to see people engaged in the more formal elements of the weekend as well as taking full opportunity to enjoy each other's company.



The first of many of the talks that took place over the weekend, Teresa, Liz and George launched the book and shared their insights into the history of Barnett House.



Attendees listened to talks and engaged in lively debate with the various speakers.





There were opportunities to buy a signed copy of the book, and attendees greatly enjoyed seeing class photos, dating back to the early 1980s.

There was plenty of informal time in which to relax as well...



We were lucky to have a few words from Chelly Halsey and from the Vice Chancellor who came directly from a graduation ceremony in order to cut the cake!



...relaxing in the garden.



Plenty of cake was provided - made by members of the department, including the fabulous 100th birthday cake made by Teena Stabler



...enjoying the book...

New appointments



Dr David Humphreys will be continuing his work with the department as Associate Professor of Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation from September 2014.

After studying at Glamorgan University and the University of Cambridge, David was employed as a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute of Public Health at the University of Cambridge between 2011 and 2013, then joined the department as Departmental Lecturer in Evidence-Based Social Intervention. David originally trained in criminological research, where he became interested in evaluating the effects of alcohol policies and assessing their impact on patterns of urban violence. Since then, David has worked more broadly on trying to understand the effects of population-level interventions (e.g. changes in policy, laws or the built environment) across areas of social science and public health. He is currently exploring how the local availability of alcohol is implicated in health and social problems related to alcohol misuse. He is also interested in how large-scale interventions affect some populations differently and is involved in several projects assessing 'equity effects' in policy interventions. These studies assess whether interventions benefit populations with the greatest need or whether such interventions inadvertently increase the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged populations.

Professor Brian Nolan joined the Department in September 2014 as Professor of Social Policy and Director of the Employment, Equity and Growth (EEG) programme. The EEG programme is an exciting new collaboration between the department and the Institute for

New Economic Thinking, Oxford Martin School, funded by the Resolution Foundation. The EEG programme is investigating the fundamental causes of why incomes have stagnated or declined for low and middle income households in the UK, why economic inequality has risen in many advanced economies, and what policy-makers might do to raise living standards, particularly for the middle and below.

Brian has published extensively on income inequality, poverty, and the welfare state, and on monitoring and improving social inclusion. He has been centrally involved in a range of collaborative cross-country research networks and projects, most recently the Growing Inequalities' Impacts (GINI) multi-country research project on inequalities and their impacts funded by the EU's Framework Programme 7. He has recently published with Oxford University Press *Poverty and Deprivation in Europe* (2011) co-authored with Christopher T. Whelan, *The Great Recession and the Distribution of Household Income* (2013), edited with Stephen Jenkins, Andrea Brandolini and John Micklewright, and two co-edited volumes from the GINI project earlier this year. He joins the department from University College Dublin, where he was Principal of the College of Human Sciences and Professor of Public Policy.

Leavers

Professor Michael Noble retired this year following a distinguished career in the department. Michael originally studied Botany at the University of Oxford before training as a lawyer. Following a position as a social welfare lawyer in a community work/welfare rights project, he joined Barnett House during the 1980s and worked as Student Unit Supervisor on the Barton Project. This project combined community work with student training for 20 years in one of the most deprived housing estates in Oxford.



Michael became a University Lecturer in the early 1990s and worked with George Smith to establish a programme of research into social security changes in the UK. Building on this work, and with funding from the ESRC and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, they set up the Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC) and began geospatial mapping of social deprivation. In 1999 SDRC won the government contract to produce a new version of the indices of multiple deprivation for England, still used by the

Department for Communities and Local Government, which is currently updating them for release in 2015.

The Centre for Analysis of South African Social Policy (CASASP) grew out of the work of SDRC and was set up by Michael to review social security provision in post-apartheid South Africa. CASASP has since undertaken a variety of work in South Africa.

Michael's main research interests are in the areas of poverty and social exclusion, housing and homelessness and income maintenance policy. He is an acknowledged international authority in research on poverty and deprivation, receiving an OBE in the New Year Honours 2001 and a CBE in the 2008 New Year's Honours List for services to research on poverty and deprivation. He is a non-executive director of Oxford Consultants for Social Exclusion (the University's first spin-out from the Social Sciences), a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, and Honorary Fellow at Human Sciences Research Council South Africa.

We also bid farewell to Dr Gemma Wright who has been at the department for many years and worked as Deputy Director of SDRC and CASASP. Gemma will continue to work in the field of social policy and has honorary appointments at the University of South Africa (Professor Extraordinarius at the Archie Mafeje Research Institute) and Rhodes University (Research Associate at the Institute of Social and Economic Research).

Awards

A number of members of the department have received awards this year. We were delighted that Dr Stuart Basten was awarded the ESRC 2nd Prize for Outstanding International Impact for his research into Asian fertility that helped convince the United Nations to revise its forecasts on future population trends. Dr Lucie Cluver received the Discovery Clinical Excellence Award: Best paper, 6th South African AIDS Conference; the James Walegumbe Memorial Award for mental health in Africa; and the IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award for her abstract: *Threefold increased suicide attempt incidence amongst AIDS-affected and abused adolescents in South Africa: a prospective national study*.

In addition, Ms Fran Bennett was made an Academician in the Academy of Social Sciences in September 2013; Prof Ann Buchanan was awarded an Honorary LLD at University of Bath in 2013; Ms Mavis Maclean was made an Honorary Bencher of Middle Temple in November 2013; and Dr Gemma Wright was appointed to the honorary position of Professor Extraordinarius in the Archie Mafeje Research Institute at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Student news

Prizes

Each year the department awards three prizes to outstanding students. The George and Teresa Smith Awards were launched in 2010 to acknowledge academic achievement by Masters students. The Awards were established by five alumni who wanted to thank the department for the opportunities and skills gained during their time at Oxford. In 2013, the George Smith Award for Comparative Social Policy was won by David Railton, and the Teresa Smith Award for Evidence-Based Social Intervention was won by Rahel Spath and Ben Verboom.

The Barnett Prize recognises the best paper submitted by a graduate research student. In 2013-14 the prize was awarded to two students: Ke Meng for *The Political Logic of China's Pension Reform (1997-2010): A Formal Model and its Empirical Tests* and Barbara Zarate Tenorio for *Social Spending Responses to Organized Labour and Mass Protests in Latin America, 1970-2007*.

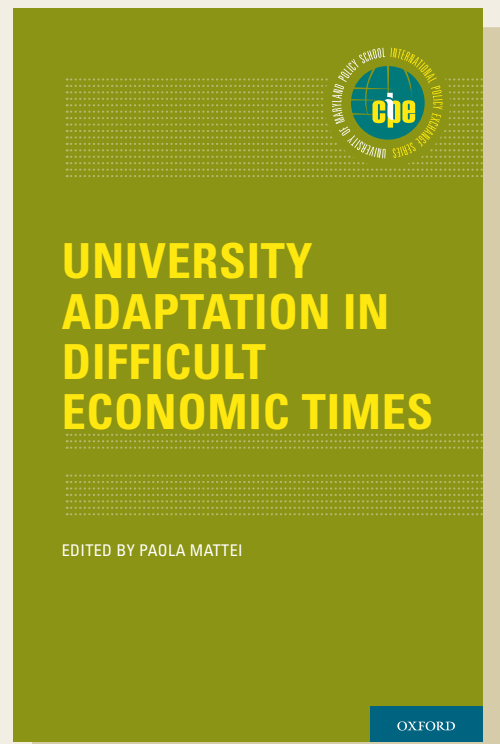
Congratulations to Faraz Shahidi, MPhil student in Comparative Social Policy 2011-13. Faraz has been awarded the best Postgraduate Paper Prize for his comparative analysis on the impact of the economic and fiscal crises on social policy at the Annual Meeting of the Social Policy Association in Sheffield in July 2014. After graduating from Oxford, Faraz enrolled in a PhD programme in Public Health at the University of Toronto in Canada.

Providing graduate scholarships remains one of the department's key aims and the main fundraising objective. This enables the best students to attend Oxford rather than taking up places in other countries where funding is more readily available. The ongoing work of alumni demonstrates the value of training the best people in Oxford. Any donations received by the department are put towards supporting students unless another purpose is specified, and we are grateful to all who contribute to supporting us in this way.

In October 2013, the newly increased Barnett Scholarship was awarded to Selcuk Beduk to read for a DPhil in Social Policy, having previously studied the MSc in Comparative Social Policy. This scholarship has been awarded to Ani Movsisyan in October 2014. The department has also established the Centenary Scholarship, awarded for the first time in October 2014. Congratulations to Julie Hennegan, the first Centenary Scholar!

The modernisation agenda of universities in Europe

Paola Mattei



Paola's new book *University Adaptation in Difficult Economic Times* (Oxford University Press, 2014), aims to take stock of some of the key processes and recent developments that have underpinned European reforms in higher education since 2008. It provides evidence contrary to the most fatalistic predictions. It does so with a novel approach: it breaches

the divide between those who see government funding as the only transformational change worthy of attention and those who are interested in broader governance reforms. How do universities adapt their internal structures and decision making to the changed environment? This is a very important question for policy-makers. The chapters in the book cover a broad geographical scope, including discussions on the UK, France, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Poland, and Sweden.

Paola considers that the key challenge for the future is how universities adapt their governance structures to new economic and financial strains. In this respect, Europe is less divided. A similar modernisation agenda in higher education emerges. This modernisation agenda is clearly centred on two main ideas.

The first idea concerns the redistribution of authority between different levels of governance, in general aimed at strengthening the institutional autonomy of universities, but also resulting in internal governance changes and increasing professionalisation of the administration of universities. This means to strengthen the central administrative level of universities at the cost of the traditional authority of national ministries and the academic community. Moving decision-making away from elected bodies to appointed leaders, such as rectors or deans, is a radical change in many universities in Europe.

The second reform trajectory of the modernisation agenda is how to fund universities. The general idea about public funding is how to make it effective and legitimate; it is not just a question of public funding levels (and percentages of GDP). The general reform idea is to use output-based models for the distribution of public funds.

bEUCitizen: Social Rights in Europe



Spending time studying in another EU Member State, travelling throughout the EU and not having to worry about healthcare coverage, or retiring in warmer climes of the EU constitute real social benefits for EU citizens and major accomplishments of EU integration. Now taken for granted by many citizens in Europe, just a couple of decades ago these activities would have involved overcoming complex bureaucratic national barriers.

However, EU integration has gone even further, guaranteeing every EU citizen the freedom to move and reside in another Member State. Moreover, based on the principles of freedom of movement and non-discrimination, various EU directives and regulations specify that the coordination of social security is no longer limited to economically active persons and that EU Citizens also have access to social security, including special non-contributory benefits and family benefits based on the same conditions as nationals. Member States have the right to withhold social assistance payments during the first three months after the arrival of an EU migrant citizen and are only obliged to provide these benefits under specific conditions during the first five years of residence. However, after five years of residence Member States have to grant social assistance to EU Citizens on the same basis as nationals.

These legal arrangements, and the increased mobility of EU citizens, have de jure and de facto significantly expanded the reach of Social Europe. However, any legal framework leaves room for interpretation and so it should not be surprising that the construction of social rights is legally and politically contested.

Within a number of Member States, but especially in the United Kingdom, the establishment of these social rights and increased intra-EU mobility have led to debates about alleged 'welfare tourism' and claims of EU Citizens taking undue advantage of the British welfare state. Research however shows that the overwhelming majority of EU citizens have come to Britain either to work or study.

Irrespective of the political debates, many newcomers to Britain are likely to be confronted with barriers in accessing their social rights. Our research will investigate these barriers in the United Kingdom and contribute to a comparative assessment throughout the EU, with a special focus on the following Member States: Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden.

The project is part of the research consortium bEUCitizen (Barriers to European Citizenship), involving 26 universities throughout Europe, and coordinated by Utrecht University. The research, which began in May 2013 and will run for a period of four years, involves an EU subsidy of €6.5 million.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613256.

A year in the life of a Junior Proctor

Most Oxford students (especially those who have had uneventful or meritorious careers) may have only an elusive notion of the Proctors' Office. Indeed, as a member of the faculty for the past 15 years, I too had the vaguest idea of Proctors and what they do when I was elected to become one in March 2013.

Oxford Proctors are first mentioned in documents dating back to 1248 and were tasked (as now) to '... generally ensure that the statutes, regulations, customs and privileges of the University are observed'.

Each year, two colleges on a rotational cycle nominate one of their members to be Proctor the following year. These are designated either 'Senior' or 'Junior' according to when they gained their respective MAs (though their status and authority are equal) and they hold office for exactly twelve months. It is important to note that Proctors are not career administrators but academics transformed into full-time senior officers of the University at the end of March each year, who therefore bring to the job direct and immediate experience of the various aspects of university activity; they know what it's like to deal with students on a daily basis, and they know how colleges and departments work.

These are important attributes given the work undertaken, of which there are perhaps five discrete components. The first involves overseeing all University examinations (including any deviation from University Regulations, however minor, for example authorising extensions of deadlines for the submission of coursework).

Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, the Proctors act as the University's academic and disciplinary overseers and investigate any issues which relate to breaches of University Regulations. During my period in office, disciplinary matters were wide-ranging and included: harassment, physical assault, verbal abuse, non-payment of library fines, over-exuberant celebration after Finals, falsification of a CV, computer hacking, libel, cheating in examinations, and (perhaps the most common, and increasingly so) allegations of plagiarism.





Oxford Proctors are first mentioned in documents dating back to 1248 and were tasked to ‘... generally ensure that the statutes, regulations, customs and privileges of the University are observed’.

The third side to the Proctors’ role, though, is in a sense the very opposite – that of ombudsman or complaints handler. Complaints from students (there were over 250 in my term) may relate to any number of issues: quality of teaching, supervision arrangements, examination papers or results, or the conduct of a viva. While Proctors do not involve themselves in matters of academic judgement, they do have to be satisfied that the procedures of the University have been properly applied; and, more generally, that the student has been given a fair deal. We serve, in that respect, as the University’s academic helpline.

A fourth component of the role, and the one I found most interesting, involves participating in the governance of the University and serving on (in theory) all of its 180+ committees, (everything from the car parking working group to Council). With over 800 years of organisational evolution, Oxford University today is a large, diverse and complex federal system – and it was fascinating to discover how a complex decentralised system of this kind really works (or doesn’t!).

The final aspect of the job is best summed up as being required to eat, drink and pray for the University! During my term of office I attended 100+ dinners, receptions, banquets and events (including one at Buckingham Palace), 50+ graduation ceremonies, and 30 church services. Personal highlights included meeting Aung San Suu Kyi (in my shadow year) and Malala Yousafzai, awarding an honorary doctorate to Sir Tom Stoppard, attending the boat race, and listening to the choristers on the top of Magdalen Tower on May Morning.

I learnt a tremendous amount during my year as the Junior Proctor, from the trivial (how to tie a bow tie) to the substantive (how a university really works) and enjoyed (almost) every single moment! Above all, I enjoyed working closely with a range of colleagues across the collegiate University that in the normal course of the ‘day job’ I would not have had the opportunity to meet. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues at Green Templeton College for giving me (and trusting me with) this unique experience.

Rebecca Surender, Junior Proctor 2013–14

Reports on Lectures



Sidney Ball Memorial Lecture 2013

Fran Bennett, Senior Teaching and Research Fellow, reports on the Sidney Ball Memorial Lecture 2014, delivered by Baroness Ruth Lister, which launched the celebrations of the Centenary of Barnett House. The Lecture, one in the annual series established after World War I in memory of Sidney Ball, the first president of Barnett House, was chaired by the Chancellor of the University, Lord Patten of Barnes.

The title of the 2013 Lecture was *Speaking Truth to Power* – a title with particular relevance to social research, especially with the current emphasis on impact, and the Barnett House centenary.

Ruth Lister discussed research on poverty, her main focus as an activist and academic. She spoke of Peter Townsend's influence in both embedding the concept of relative poverty and inspiring public debate and action. She expressed concern about attempts to limit challenges to government policies, and noted that poverty statistics may not be enough to create a constituency for change. She highlighted recent developments, including more emphasis on the experience of poverty. But whether the resulting policy messages are taken on board by governments depends not only on the political context and how the research is used but also on the luck of timing. Another focus has been the agency and assets

of people living in poverty, illuminated by qualitative longitudinal research and by the 'sustainable livelihoods' framework from international development. It is increasingly recognised that policy on poverty must be sensitive to people's survival strategies and to expertise born of experience.

She argued that, despite a declared commitment to evidence-based policy-making, politicians can be reluctant to hear messages that do not chime with their ideology or with polls showing reduced empathy for those in poverty; and civil servants may be more receptive to research that uses certain methods. However, whilst social enquiry cannot achieve change by itself, it is nonetheless crucial to bringing about social reform and inspiring social action.

Centenary Alumni Lecture

As part of the centenary celebrations, Barnett House held its first Alumni Lecture, delivered by alumna Jacqueline Bhabha, Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health. Elaine Chase reports.

Forty years after graduating from Barnett House, Jacqueline gave the department's first alumni lecture, *Making a Difference: Policy, Practice and Human Rights*. Her work, she said, continued to be underpinned by the same guiding principles learned within the department.



Jacqueline Bhabha, Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health



Baroness Ruth Lister

Action research or ‘academic activism’ is about mixed teams of social researchers and practitioners working with and within communities to understand and find solutions to social problems which have multiple, overlapping and interconnected causes. After leaving Barnett House, Jacqueline gained her first experience of this approach by working as part of a community project in Birmingham. The work then, she reflected, was fundamentally about human rights, even if it was not defined as such: the right to family life; the right to protection from degrading treatment; the right to adequate shelter. Ultimately, such work was about the enhancement of human dignity, the ‘cardinal fulcrum’ of international human rights law.

As an academic specialist in immigration, human rights and asylum law, Jacqueline spoke of how change comes not just through litigation but through harnessing evidence-based research to build constituency and political will for reform. Making a difference is about systematically documenting the day-to-day obstacles that people face in exercising their rights and using them to influence broader national and international human rights frameworks and principles. In her own work, such an approach had fundamentally changed thinking about the gendered dimensions of ‘persecution’ and political activity in refugee law; had highlighted the ambivalence of social policy towards certain groups such as the Roma; and had informed bottom-up approaches to the execution of social and economic rights as a means of preventing human rights abuses.

Zola Skweyiya Lecture

The inaugural Zola Skweyiya Lecture on South African Social Policy was held in 2011. David McLennan reports on the third lecture delivered in October 2013.

The third annual Zola Skweyiya Lecture on South African Social Policy took place on 23 October 2013 at the department. Mr Vusi Madonsela (Director General of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Republic of South Africa) spoke on Current Issues in South African Social Policy: *The Role of Local Government*. Mr Madonsela outlined in detail the mandate of local government as contained in the constitution and further developed in white papers. As Mr Madonsela put it “South Africa’s developmental local government is the chassis upon which a capable and developmental state must be built”. In particular Local Government has the mandate of being responsible for a number of areas of infrastructure and service delivery. Local Government is also responsible for ensuring that services are delivered in an appropriate and accountable manner. South Africa’s colonial segregation and apartheid past leave Local Government in the unenviable position of having to deal with this legacy in terms of service delivery both in urban townships and former homelands that were deliberately left undeveloped and largely un-serviced. Mr Madonsela concluded by setting out the plans that have been made to ensure that service delivery failures are dealt with speedily and appropriately.

Where are they **now**?

Angus Macpherson

Angus Macpherson came to Barnett House in 1955 after taking an honours degree in Modern History at Worcester College, Oxford. He chose to do the Diploma in Public and Social Administration in preparation for the entry examination into the Administrative Class of the Home Civil Service. The Diploma subjects, and the lecturers and tutors, were social psychology (Dr Freeman); sociology (Mr Collison); criminology (Dr Max Grunhut); British social and economic history (Mr G D H Cole); and public and social administration (Miss Harrison). This provided an excellent preparation for the Civil Service examination, which he passed in 1956.

He served in the Scottish Office from 1956 to 1987, and was seconded to the Cabinet Office in London from 1972 to 1976. The subjects and policies on which he worked were varied. For his first three years he dealt with Scottish local government and civil law. There followed two years as private secretary to a minister, which entailed regular attendance in the House of Commons. The next four years were spent administering home defence, during the period of the Cuban missiles crisis. After that, he experienced four years dealing with general medical services; followed by three years in social work services where he helped to set up the Scottish children's panel system. He was then transferred to the Cabinet secretariat to work on the preparation of legislation, and on the government's economic policies. When he returned to the Scottish Office in 1976 he was put



in charge of schools education. His next job was to administer services for acute medical conditions and mental health, during which he helped to develop the government's response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. For the next four years, he was chair of the management board of the State Hospital, Carstairs, which cares for patients with severe mental health problems.

Since retirement, Angus has been closely involved in the administration of charities concerned with mental health, alcoholism, AIDS and the elderly. He has been convener of a committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. In 1996 he took a degree in geology with the Open University.

Before coming up to Oxford in 1952, he was a national service officer in the Royal Artillery and continued as an artillery officer in the Territorial Army for ten years after 1952.



Ian Baxter

After reading Modern History at Keble College, Oxford, Ian completed the MSc in Applied Social Studies and Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) at Barnett House between 1981 and 1983. In the contrasting political climate of the Falklands crisis and a royal wedding, a first placement in community work in Coventry provided experience of grass roots community action. A second placement at Oxfordshire Social Services marked out the realities of state services managing the impacts of poverty and social disadvantage. His thesis examined tenant participation in housing management just as the Thatcher government changed the nature of state housing permanently.

Ian went on to a 15-year social work career in Oxfordshire, working in general medical, geriatric and endocrine services at the Radcliffe Infirmary and John Radcliffe Hospital until 1989, and then in practice and management of children and families, child protection and out of hours duty services until 1998. His last two parallel roles were as Child Protection Coordinator, chairing more than 650 case conferences, and Emergency Duty Officer, dealing with innumerable cases of every type at every hour. In 1994-95 he was seconded half-time as social work tutor at Ruskin College.

In 1998 he left social work to join the railway (perhaps his childhood dream), working at the enterprising and highly successful Chiltern Railways, where he became General Manager in 2007 and a Director between 2009 and 2012, being part of the team that transformed the London Marylebone to Birmingham Snow Hill route. He is now an independent railway consultant and author, and is back in Coventry working on the regeneration of the modernist, Grade-II listed Coventry Railway Station.

In the wake of the 1960s and 1970s, for Ian the Barnett House MSc/CQSW course translated youthful idealism and radicalism into evidence-based professionalism to be used in a day-to-day form in the tough environment of social work practice.

“Barnett House brought together Oxford’s academic rigour and the real world – it was no ‘ivory tower’. If I regret that Barnett House no longer trains social workers, its continued commitment to research influencing social policy and intervention sustains its key role in the ‘work to be done’. It taught me to regularly walk on the front-line, and years later its principles still applied when, as a railway Director, you could occasionally see me working as the train guard or the catering steward.”

“Barnett House brought together Oxford’s academic rigour and the real world.”

Where are they **now?**
continued...

“It’s quite difficult to put into words the influence Barnett House has had on my life.”



Sweta Rajan-Rankin

Sweta came to Barnett House in 2003 and completed an MPhil in Comparative Social Policy, exploring gendered impacts of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in three Indian states. In 2005, she embarked on her doctoral journey with Teresa Smith, to examine the topical subject of work-life balance initiatives in Indian call centres and was awarded her DPhil degree in Social Policy in 2010. Sweta’s research interests broadly encompass the gendered interface between globalisation, transnational corporations and worker identities. The rigorous research training she received at Barnett House enabled her to become proficient at qualitative methods such as participatory action research, as well as advanced quantitative techniques like structural equation modelling. During her time in St Hilda’s College, Sweta received the Julia Mann Graduate Scholarship for academic merit and the British Chevening scholarship from the British Council.

After completing her doctorate at Barnett House, Sweta became a Lecturer in Social Policy and Sociology at Brunel University London. She has won several awards and research grants including

the Richard Benjamin Memorial Grant for Social and Occupational Psychology, as well as nominations for Inspirational and Innovative Teaching Awards.

Sweta has published in high ranking journals such as the British Journal of Social Work, and reviews for numerous journals and for the ESRC. She lives in West London with her husband and one year old son.

“It’s quite difficult to put into words the influence Barnett House has had on my life. It has been a transformational experience, sensitising me to the structural issues of poverty, oppression and discrimination, and the interlinkages between macro level policy and individual realities. It was from my time at Barnett House and St Hilda’s College, that I became aware of the quest for excellence at professional standards, and the importance of evidence-based policy interventions; while not losing at the core, my commitment and passion for attempting to empower those who are excluded from society. It has been a perfect marriage between my radical social work roots and my social policy academic background.”



“I also made not only important contacts but great friends who continue to encourage me to be a confident and independent researcher.”

Triin Edovald

Triin completed her DPhil in Evidence-Based Social Intervention in 2009, having previously been among the first group of students to complete the MSc in Evidence-Based Social Work in 2004. During her DPhil, Triin worked with Professor Frances Gardner on a study looking at the prevalence of delinquency amongst Estonian youth and risk factors for delinquency.

After her DPhil, Triin went on to work as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the National Academy for Parenting Research at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. She then took up a post at the Social Research Unit at Dartington (SRU) where she managed the adaptation of a cost-benefit model developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to inform government investment decisions for use in the UK. While at the SRU, she also filled the role of Head of Research for the Family Nurse Partnership National Unit,

coordinating the research and data analysis strand of work on the FNP programme in the UK.

Currently Triin is a Research Director in the Evaluation Team at NatCen offering an end-to-end evaluation service from needs assessment to impact evaluation. Triin is regularly invited to provide consultancy to the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs. She is also a visiting lecturer at the University of Tartu in Estonia.

“During my DPhil studies at Barnett House, I gained valuable skills in the evaluation of social interventions as well as knowledge around the development, implementation and scale up of interventions in the context of evidence-based policy making. I also made not only important contacts but great friends who continue to encourage me to be a confident and independent researcher.”

We are proud of the work of all our alumni and love hearing your news. We feature alumni profiles on our website as well as every year in Barnett House News: visit www.spi.ox.ac.uk/alumni to keep in touch. We also have a LinkedIn group, Barnett House alumni. If you would like to be featured on the website please contact alumni@spi.ox.ac.uk



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