

The Open University

Autumn 2010 Issue 246

## BRAND CULTURE

What is the power of a brand  
and how is it maintained?



## WORLD CUP 2010

Where might have the  
economy benefited?

## THANKS TO YOU

New OU projects  
due to your support

## MODULES

New modules in retail,  
autism and Italian



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# Welcome



THIS AUTUMN ISSUE of *Sesame* includes a fantastic mix of content guaranteed to excite.

The England World Cup may have been disappointing (at least for England fans), but Open University Business School academic Howard Viney explores what the involvement may have done for the economy. Having been at the event in South Africa, and with the London 2012 Olympics approaching,

he also wonders what hosting a major tournament really means to the host nation, both during and after the occasion.

We have taken a look at what the donations from friends of the OU are enabling the University to do, with a focus on some of the newer projects that are now being undertaken. We also speak to alumna Yvonne Perret, whose donation is enabling children's research at the OU, and also chat to alumna Marion Sherwood who, due to the positive experience she has had studying with the OU, has decided to leave a gift in her Will to enable others to study.

Senior Lecturer Fiona Ellis-Chadwick looks at marketing and brands, explaining why some of us simply have to have the big name labels when it comes to food, fashion, and other commodities. We look at Fiona's new module which focuses on retail management and marketing, and she talks about new BBC/OU co-production *The Brands That Feed Us*. Also in the Study section we look at a popular module that launched last year, *Understanding the autism spectrum*.

The OU's Careers Service has produced a great article on the importance of networking – a skill that is beneficial to job seekers, particularly during the current economic climate, and those wishing to develop their career.

You can contact the team at [sesame@open.ac.uk](mailto:sesame@open.ac.uk). For inclusion in the Letters pages please mark 'Letters' in your subject header.

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# Update

All the latest news from The Open University

HIGH-PROFILE VISIT

## Prime Minister chooses the OU

It's a Great British innovation, says Cameron



Prime Minister David Cameron delivers his speech at The Open University library

● **PRIME MINISTER** David Cameron seems to like the OU – he has twice chosen the University as the venue to make a key policy speech to the nation. His latest, in June, which was followed by a question-and-answer session with journalists, was filmed by the BBC, ITV and Sky News. He delivered a stark warning about the UK's budget deficit.

During his opening remarks Mr Cameron said: "We must never take our eyes off the need for building strong and sustained

economic growth in Britain – growth in which our universities, and perhaps the OU in particular, should play a huge part.

"The knowledge-based economy is the economy of the future and in building that economy – and recognising that it is not just about young people's skills, but people's skills all through their lives – the OU has a huge, huge role to play. It is a Great British innovation and invention and it is a privilege to be here this morning." The BBC's political editor, Nick

Robinson, who attended the press conference, added: "He is an admirer of the OU and the OU may illustrate what has to happen. The OU offers the government value for money because people are studying while still earning a living, while still paying taxes."

Mr Cameron also made a key policy speech at the OU on electoral reform when Leader of the Opposition; and former PM Gordon Brown chose the OU to deliver a speech as part of his Election campaign.

ONLINE

## Devolve Me website an award winner

● **THE CELEBRATIONS** surrounding the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth have been over for a year or so, but the OU's popular 'Devolve Me' fun face-morph tool is still evolving nicely. By uploading a photo to Devolve Me, you can take your image back to how you might have looked as an *Australopithecus afarensis* (3.7 million years ago), a *Homo habilis* (2.2 million years ago), a *Homo erectus* (1.8 million years ago) or a *Homo heidelbergensis* (500,000 years ago).

More than 700,000 people have visited the website since it was launched in 2009. It has since won a Drum award for Digital Innovation (DADI), and a HEIST (Higher Education Marketing, Consultancy and Research) award.

More than 500,000 people have already Devolved themselves. Try **Devolve Me** at [www.open.ac.uk/darwin](http://www.open.ac.uk/darwin)



## OPENLEARN AWARD

## OpenLearn wins top award

Praise for 'bold project'

● OPENLEARN HAS WON the ICT Initiative of the Year Award at the Times Higher Leadership & Management Awards.

OpenLearn is the OU's open educational resource – visitors get access to free bite-sized units, taken from full-length OU modules, which they can study when and where they want.

Chris Cobb, one of the judges, said: "The OpenLearn innovation breaks open previous university business models and chimes in an age when everyone expects content for free."

"The boldness of the project is based on having absolute confidence in the quality of the OU experience – over and above that of teaching resources alone."

Andy Lane, Senior Research Fellow on OLnet and former



Ex-Director of OpenLearn Andy Lane

Director of OpenLearn, collected the award and said: "This award is further recognition of The Open University's global leadership in open education and open educational resources."

**To read more about OpenLearn, including the new launch, see p8.**

**To visit the site, see [www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn)**

## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

## Stranded!

OU to the rescue...

● STUDENTS ON THE week-long residential school *Observing the universe* (SXR208) in Mallorca in April had more reason than most to remember it. They were among thousands of air travellers stranded by volcanic ash clouds emerging from Iceland.

OU staff worked round the clock to coordinate an epic 2,600-mile overland return trip for the 15 students and five staff taking part. An improvised home journey arranged by the OU led to a ferry trip to the Spanish mainland, then a 26-hour coach journey to Milton Keynes. Tessa Holroyde, Head of Residential Schools, said that while students are technically responsible for their own travel to and from the Mallorcan residential school, "we felt we had a duty of care, not only to our staff but to our students".

## Just in...



### Change of terminology

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY is changing its terminology to bring it closer to that of the rest of the Higher Education sector. Points will now be referred to as credits; awards will be referred to as qualifications; and courses will now be referred to as modules. The changes will be implemented gradually from July 2010 onwards.

### OU awarded Carbon Trust Standard

THE OU HAS been awarded the Carbon Trust Standard in recognition for measuring, managing and reducing its carbon emissions across all its centres. The University, which spends £3.5 million annually on energy, achieved a six per cent reduction in emissions – well exceeding the Carbon Trust's target of 3.7 per cent.

### New Alumni representative on Senate

THE NEW ALUMNI Representative on Senate is Dr Petrina Stevens. She replaces Veronica Summers – you can read her farewell at [www.open.ac.uk/platform/campus/people](http://www.open.ac.uk/platform/campus/people)

Senate meetings focus on major issues of academic strategy, policy, priority and performance at the OU.

If you are a member of the alumni and wish to raise any issues, please contact the alumni office on **+44 (0)1908 653815** or email [alumni@open.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@open.ac.uk)

## ALAN TURING BUILDING

## New OU building opens

Faculty of Mathematics, Computing & Technology's new building officially opened



VC Martin Bean, Sir John Dermot Turing and the OU's Dr Mick Bromilow

● THE ALAN TURING Building, home to The Open University's Faculty of Mathematics, Computing & Technology (MCT), has been officially opened by the Father of Computer Science's nephew, Sir John Dermot Turing.

Alan Turing's codebreaking work at Bletchley Park has been credited with shortening the Second World War by two years. Vice-Chancellor Martin Bean said: "The plaque on this building serves as a reminder to everyone, every time they walk through these doors, that

we draw inspiration from a brilliant man whose life was tragically cut short at such a young age [41]."

July's event began with speeches from Turing experts Dr Andrew Hodges (Oxford University and Turing's biographer); Professor Philip Maini (Oxford University); Professor Darrel Ince (OU), on his contributions to computing; and Tony Sale, founder of the Bletchley Park Museum and restorer of the Colossus Enigma machine, one of the computing devices used by British codebreakers to read encrypted German messages during the Second World War.

**To find out more about computing at the OU, see [www.open.ac.uk/study](http://www.open.ac.uk/study)**

# FREE home insulation

If you are 70 or over or on qualifying benefits† – you don't have to be a British Gas customer to benefit



● British Gas will install loft and cavity wall insulation for free and that includes the survey, labour, materials – they will also insulate your loft hatch and lag your pipes and water tank for free too. As one of the nation's leading installers, British Gas installed loft and cavity wall insulation in over 190,000 homes in 2009.

## Call British Gas today to claim

All you have to do is give British Gas a call. One of our surveyors will visit your home and assess what insulation it needs. After that we'll arrange a convenient time to come round and do the work. Just call **0800 068 0032** and quote **SESAME** before **31 December 2010**.

## Insulation can help you reduce your energy bills

Loft and cavity wall insulation helps to make homes as energy efficient as possible. It helps to stop heat escaping through the walls and the roof of your home, and saves you money.

Loft insulation could save around **£150\*** a year on your energy bills and around another **£115\*** with wall insulation – even topping up your insulation could save around **£45\*** a year.

## It's simple to install and takes less than a day

All you need to do is set aside some time for British Gas expert installers to do the work. Wall insulation is done from the outside so there's very little fuss or mess, which means you can get on with your daily routine inside. And they can normally work around what you have stored in your loft. They even clean up any mess before they leave.

## What else is on offer?

If you qualify for free insulation you can also request a free British Gas Standby Saver\*\*, which stops electrical appliances using energy when in standby mode. This easy-to-use energy-saving device will be delivered to you once the insulation has been installed.

## What if I'm not eligible for free home insulation?

British Gas will insulate your loft for just **£274^** and cavity wall for **£250^**. Just call **0800 068 0032** and quote **SESAME** before **31 December 2010**.

Get **FREE** insulation as long as you live in a house no larger than an average 4 bedroom detached, and you're 70 or over or on any of the following benefits:

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- Child or Working Tax Credit (income no more than £16,040)
- Council Tax Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Disablement Pension (includes Constant Attendance Allowance)
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- War Disablement Pension (which includes Mobility Supplement or Constant Attendance Allowance)

For **FREE** Home Insulation call now on **0800 068 0032** and quote **SESAME** before 31 December 2010.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: †Offer ends 31 December 2010. We install in mainland GB only, subject to availability and survey. Not valid in North and West Scotland. Offer applies to properties up to but no larger than 140m<sup>2</sup> (cavity wall) and 80m<sup>2</sup> (loft). Offer excludes scaffolding and any specialist equipment if required. Offer only applies where the thickness of existing insulation is less than 60mm.

\*Source: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Energy-saving-assumptions July 2009. Loft insulation savings are based on the customer's current insulation being 0-60mm. Actual savings depend on individual circumstances. \*\*One product per household across all British Gas offers. Subject to availability. Please allow 28 days for delivery. ^ Prices based on a 3 bedroom semi-detached home. Eligible only for measures recommended by the appointed surveyor. Prices may vary, are subject to change and exclude scaffolding and any specialist equipment if required. We install in mainland GB only, subject to availability. Not valid in North and West Scotland. Inclusion in offer is subject to survey. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other British Gas home insulation offer. Offer subject to withdrawal at any time. Correct at July 2010. British Gas Trading Limited. Registered in England & Wales: No. 3078711. Millstream, Maidenhead Road, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 5GD



## ENVIRONMENT

## Earthwatch partnership

OU students can work alongside charity's scientists

● THE OPEN UNIVERSITY and the environmental charity Earthwatch have launched a partnership to engage people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment.

The OU and Earthwatch have been working together since 1979, but the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding heralds a new and invigorated phase in the relationship.

Nigel Winsor, the Earthwatch Executive Vice-President, said: "We are inspired by the opportunities this collaboration presents for our work to reach an even greater global network of citizen scientists and it is a privilege to work with such innovative and pioneering individuals. OU students will



A geothermal power station in Iceland

work alongside Earthwatch scientists carrying out vital environmental research, and their learning experiences will contribute to their own academic and personal goals."

Earthwatch has funded OU scientists to investigate geothermal power in Costa Rica and Iceland, and to study the environmental impact of persistently active volcanoes in Nicaragua. The essence of

an Earthwatch project is that volunteers collect field research data.

The new partnership will enable OU students to count Earthwatch volunteering towards the practical science component of their BSc Natural Science. It will also enable Earthwatch and the OU to have more joint research projects and to jointly fund PhD studentships.

## STUDY

## Module cut-off dates update

Changes in registration close timings



Students wanting to study in February need to register by 22 December

CONTINUING STUDENTS should please note that the new cut-off date to register on most undergraduate modules starting in February 2011 is 22 December.

The exceptions to this final enrolment date are: postgraduate modules, short

modules with single-stage registration, and the one-week residential school *Observing the universe* (SXR208).

Students who intend to apply for financial support, and live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, need to have linked their modules to financial

support by 1 December and forms must be received by The Open University no later than 8 December.

Continuing students in Scotland applying for financial support should return their applications, with their registration agreement, before the final enrolment date.

Continuing students applying for a £500 ILA Scotland award must send their ILA500 application form for endorsement to The Open University in Scotland before 24 November 2010.

If you need further help or information, please contact the Student Registration and Enquiry Service on **+44 (0)845 300 6090** or visit [www.open.ac.uk/study](http://www.open.ac.uk/study)

## Just in...



### Twenty million iTunes U downloads for OU

THE OU HAS reached a milestone as the first university in the world to hit 20 million downloaded tracks on iTunes U, a dedicated area within the iTunes Store ([www.itunes.com](http://www.itunes.com)). Anyone can download OU tracks from iTunes U for free. The most popular OU collections have been languages and arts, with the most downloaded to date being Beginner's French.

### OU professor joins UK space council

JOHN ZARNECKI, OU Professor of Space Science, has been appointed a member of the Space Leadership Council. As a member of the advisory body, John will give strategic advice to the Government and the UK Space Agency on future plans and opportunities for growth in the UK space sector.

### Creative writing student's play in festival

STUDENT NICK Athanasiou turned a 15-minute script produced as an assignment for *Advanced creative writing* (A363) into a one-hour play and entered it in the Trilateral Stage Play Festival in Nottingham. *After Life*, about a woman forced to move back in with her parents, was selected and performed to a sell-out audience. "It was thrilling," said Nick, "Without A363 I would never have had this experience."

ONLINE

# OpenLearn

The new and improved website from the OU offers free module material and other great content...

● “STEP INTO A world of inspiring learning” urges The Open University’s most recent TV advertising campaign. It’s a message that is perfectly in tune with the launch of the enhanced OpenLearn website.

OpenLearn, The Open University’s free module material website, has been transformed into a unique gateway to the wealth of free Open University learning material available online – whether it’s module (previously referred to as course) texts, video, audio or online learning support.

The new OpenLearn site includes the TV- and radio-related content formerly found on the OU/BBC website Open2.net, which has now been incorporated into OpenLearn. Some 5,000 hours of material, dating back as far as 1999, has been transferred from the old OU/BBC site and integrated with existing OpenLearn content.

## LEARNINGSPEACE

The core of the existing content is the LearningSpace, hundreds of extracts from Open University module material, accompanied by other resources to support self-study and encourage learners to support one another. OpenLearn also contains an area called the LabSpace for professional educators to share and re-mix open educational resources.

The original OpenLearn site was launched in 2006. The relaunched version is part of a strategy to bring The Open University’s burgeoning ‘open content’ – that is the material it

makes available for free – all together in one place. This also includes the growing range of OU material now available on iTunes U and YouTube.

Laura Dewis, Managing Editor of the new OpenLearn site, says one of the bonuses for students is that the huge range of content is aligned to the OU curriculum. “When you look at OpenLearn you’ll see module material, podcasts from iTunes U, maybe videos from YouTube – a whole mix of content in one place.

“The site features contributions from OU academics and associate lecturers. You can read and listen to expert comment from the people who write your module materials and get their take on topical issues.

“All this content is grouped into subject areas related to OU study. So it should be easy for someone studying, say maths, to find everything relating to maths that The Open University offers for free to the public – including things which are not in their module, but that they may find interesting. For students

**“If you are a student with a passion for your subject, you are more than likely to find something of interest”**

familiar with the old open2.net site, they will find the broadcast-related content is much more clearly aligned to the OU curriculum than it has been in the past.”

Those familiar with the old OpenLearn website will also notice the new site looks very different – and although OpenLearn is designed for a wider audience than Open University students alone, it is



OpenLearn has a wealth of free Open University learning material available online

being used by many students, says Laura.

“About two-thirds of the people who register on OU modules from the OpenLearn site are existing students,

you are thinking of taking next, and see how you get on with it.

“There is a lot of material in OpenLearn designed for people who have not studied at higher education level. The website is designed to be accessible to a wide public audience. But if you are a student with a passion for your subject, or you enjoy OU/BBC programmes, you are more than likely to find something of interest.”

## WIDER STRATEGY

The relaunch of OpenLearn, with the incorporation of open2.net, was designed to put all the free online OU material in one place. But it is also part of a wider strategy, says Laura.

“Open2.net was created more than 10 years ago to support OU programmes on the BBC,” says Laura. “The





original OpenLearn site was created in 2006 to make OU module material publicly available. The OU on iTunes and YouTube were separate initiatives that followed later.

“So we had all of these offerings dispersed, which was quite confusing. But looking at the bigger picture, the OU’s mission to be open – to people, places, ideas and methods – and the development of our

**“The internet has become the perfect place for academics to engage with the public”**

open content online is part of that mission. We’ve spent 40 years broadcasting, now we need to spend the next 40 years making use of the internet to widen access to education.

“With OpenLearn we are leading in the field of open content – I would say we are among the top open education content providers globally, in terms of scale and quality – as has been recently recognised by the Times Higher award earlier this year.”

The public platform provided by OpenLearn is helping the OU to improve what it does, she adds. “We have a global

academics used to have in broadcasting. Now the internet has become the perfect place for academics to engage with the public. It’s an ideal form, more cost-effective than broadcasting and more versatile – you can do more interactive material, and material which is more closely related to learning outcomes.”

With open content, it’s a case of the more you share, the more you get back, she says. “Many other universities have been funded to put material out there too, so we can see what others are doing and spot opportunities to collaborate in creating modules and reducing duplication of effort.”

To explore the new OpenLearn site go to [www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn)

## FAQs



### What is OpenLearn?

OpenLearn is an award-winning website created to make OU learning material available free worldwide. The original OpenLearn included extracts from OU module texts supported by free online learning tools and discussion forums. It made the OU into one of the pioneers of the worldwide open educational content movement.

### What is significant about the relaunch?

It contains nearly twice as much content as the old site and is more comprehensive. Previously, OU open content was scattered across different sites; now OpenLearn holds everything the OU offers for free.

### Why is material offered free on OpenLearn when students have to pay for it?

OpenLearn only offers, on average, five per cent of the material of a given module. And although anyone can use OpenLearn units for self-study, they can’t earn any OU module credits or qualifications.

### What’s the difference between OpenLearn and the OU’s Platform website?

Platform is the OU community website, aimed primarily at students and alumni. The community is encouraged to contribute and create content. OpenLearn is aimed at the whole world and most of the content is created by academics.

# We've got mail!

If you'd like your letter or email to *Sesame* to be considered for inclusion in the Letters pages, please email [sesame@open.ac.uk](mailto:sesame@open.ac.uk) or write to *Sesame* at The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit letters. Letters may be permanently available to read online at [www.open.ac.uk/platform](http://www.open.ac.uk/platform)

## NEVER TOO YOUNG

Well into retirement and then widowhood, I decided to assess my lifestyle. "Be selfish, Mom," said my grown-up daughters, "do something for yourself." Up until then my paid work had been mainly for the benefit of others, and now, so was my voluntary work.

However, there was still something cerebral that was unfulfilled. I'd always felt that I had been 'done out' of a place at university, due to a lack of money and expectations for girls in my youth. The OU was a second chance. I had all the usual trepidations – my age, my brain, was I too over the hill to absorb facts and details?

Armed with a couple of recent A-levels, I attended an Open University meeting in Oxford where the advisors were most encouraging. It was suggested that I go for an Honours degree in Literature and English Language. It was very exciting to receive so much advice, and book lists and to be involved with words again.

In the first year there was a week's residential Foundation course. I thought I would be out of my depth. After all, I was veering towards 80. I was delighted to find it ageless, classless, with tutors who were full of enthusiasm. Returning home might have been lonely but we continued with monthly tutorials.

I chose the Birmingham Symphony Hall for the ceremony and one that I will remember. My niece from 'down under', my sister and my daughters helped me to celebrate. As I shook hands with the then Vice-Chancellor, I murmured to her that I must be one of the oldest graduates. "Oh no," she smiled, "last week we had a gentleman of 92" – which proves that it's never too late!

SYLVIA VIZARD-WILLIAMS, WARWICKSHIRE

## INSPIRED BY THE OU

Good morning one and all. Just sitting here reading *Sesame* issue 243 over breakfast and wanted to thank you all for your great work. I mislaid this issue and it turned up a couple of days ago – I was so glad to find it!

A few years ago I started a History degree, basically to see if I had anything between my ears! Having never done much in education due to continuous travelling as an Army brat, I often wondered if I could study to such a level – so I applied to do something that interests me.

Unfortunately I damaged my spine, which meant I could not continue my studies past my second year as I had major issues with concentration and being able to stay in one position for any length of time. The OU was brilliant: there was a great deal of support.

Soon after, I underwent major surgery on my spine and never managed to finish my degree. However, after about three years of recuperation I



embarked on voluntary work with St John Ambulance. The encouragement I received from the OU has meant that I have studied with St John Ambulance and after doing several courses and assessments became an Emergency Transport Attendant. I now drive and crew an ambulance when needed.

Not what I envisaged doing when I started with the OU but all made possible with the immense support I received. Keep up the excellent work. ROY TERRY, KENT

## OPEN DAYS

Many thanks for sending me the Spring copy of *Sesame* – I hadn't seen once since 1980.

## LAW DEGREE LED TO CRIME WRITING

I studied for LLB [*the Law degree*] with the OU, graduating in 2004. I had ideas, sadly unrealised, for going on to train as a barrister, but, believe me, nothing is ever wasted.

My first novel, a thriller entitled *Tower Court*, has been published and contains, guess what? A trial scene. My second is with the publishers and also contains a trial scene, but is set in the Isle of Man so entailed research into Manx law and procedure.

It was a direct result of the degree that I started writing. I enjoyed working on the assignments so much that it was a wrench to stop when the course was completed. Turning to fiction seemed to be a natural follow-on. I hope past and present law students will check the books out; constructive criticism gratefully received! And good luck to all students, and thanks to the OU for its inspiration!

ALLISON FORBES, MANCHESTER





I was sad to note that Open Days are now hardly featured.

I started the Open Days when I was General Secretary of OUSA. The first two were a great success, as any member of the then Executive would confirm – even though John Greenall [former OU Director of Information] thought no one would be bothered to come – he did admit afterwards that he was wrong!

REX PARKINSON-HARE,  
GREAT YARMOUTH



in Cardiff. Having booked it and ordered hire gowns and photographs, as the day drew nearer I admit a little bit of apprehension started creeping in. However, as three of our grown-up daughters had expressed a wish to be there and were travelling from various locations, cancelling was not an option. As the day dawned, it began with us checking in and then to the robing floor where the gowns were fitted. Suitably attired, it was off to the photography floor where we were expertly posed for a family group and one of just the two of us.

By now, the nerves were clicking a bit but there was also the feeling of self achievement. The graduates proceeded to the seats at the front of this impressive hall, which added a sense of grandeur to the event. The dignitaries, then led by the

mace bearer, advanced onto the stage. The dignitaries' speeches were spot on about what it is like being an OU student whilst juggling family life and work. Then as the presentations began, we went to the side of the stage. Then as the names were read out, we looked into the sea of faces with relatives waving and hundreds of unknown people applauding – I felt like I belonged to The Open University family and admit having a real sense of pride. The coveted, hard-worked for prize of a BA (Hons) was a reality.

So if you are out there doing your courses and feeling, like I did on more than one occasion, of giving up, please, please persevere as the end result is more than worth it.

Good luck in your studies to all of you.

TIM McMAHON, PEMBROKESHIRE

### HEADING FOR 30

Re Dave Lane's letter in the Spring issue of *Sesame* (244): I am now in my 27th and 28th course with The Open University, over 16 years (with gaps) with one BA, two MAs, a Diploma in Music and a Certificate in Spanish completed, an MSc, a BA

and a postgraduate diploma on the go.

PETER GROSS, LITHUANIA



### USED TEXTBOOKS?

Students used to sell their course textbooks and materials through *Sesame*, but I notice that the online version doesn't offer this option. Is this a service that is no longer available in *Sesame*?

SUSAN COOKE, VIA EMAIL

*Scott Russon, Editor of Sesame, responds:*

Thank you for your email.

I am afraid we no longer run classified ads either the online or print version of *Sesame*.

You can, however, buy and sell Open University module material at [www.universitybooksearch.co.uk](http://www.universitybooksearch.co.uk) email [jo@universitybooksearch.co.uk](mailto:jo@universitybooksearch.co.uk) or call 01395 442174.

### GRADUATION JOY

On 24 April my wife Joy and myself both had our graduation ceremonies at St David's Hall

### GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT

Studying with the OU enabled me to build my confidence with higher level study; select the courses that suited the degree that I wanted and gradually work towards a qualification whilst balancing my time with family and work.

Initially, I relied on alumni funding to continue with my studies. I am grateful that it was available, so I continue to donate to the fund to help others on the learning ladder.

I began to work as a childminder and was able to fund my studies as well as spend time with my family. It did become more difficult towards the end of my degree as I was working full time, studying more demanding courses and trying to spend quality time with my family.

It was a great moment to officially graduate at Ely Cathedral with my family present to share the experience. I have now gone on to complete a PGCE at the University of East Anglia and I am in my seventh year of teaching at a primary school. I have achieved my aim and thoroughly enjoyed it – even though at times it still feels like I'm working as hard as I did to achieve my degree.

Studying with the OU certainly taught me the skills of time management and self motivation to work and study that hold me in good stead with my job today. It also provided me with the path to where I am successfully today.

MISS J E LUCE (BSC HONS)



## NEW TV PROGRAMME

# Brand spanking

A new BBC/OU co-production looks at three basic foodstuff commodities – yoghurt, cereals and water – that have been transformed into million pound industries as a result of branding and marketing...

● IN THE UK, we have clean water available on tap and yet we spend our hard-earned cash buying 2 billion litres of bottled water every year.

The food industry has become very clever at repackaging basic commodities and selling them to us at high prices. How they've done this is revealed in *The Brands That Feed Us*, a new OU/BBC three-part series from the *Money Programme* stable.

The British food industry is worth £80 billion a year, and a unique set of circumstances has made Britain a key target market for food multinationals.

Each of the three episodes focuses on a different commodity (water, cereals and yoghurt) and tells the story of how each has given rise to some of the richest and most successful industries in the world, spawning brands that are now household names. As well as the business and marketing

stories behind these phenomena, the series also looks at the cultural influence of well-known brands.

Dr Fiona Ellis-Chadwick, Senior Lecturer in Retail Management at the OU, is an academic adviser to the series. She says it is an excellent set of enquiries into the power of branding. "It is essential to have

**"It is fascinating to see how, as brands grow in importance, a story emerges that gives heritage and meaning"**

water, but it's not essential to have it packaged in a nice bottle.

"Brands of bottled water have developed strongly in the past 30 years, for example, Perrier, Evian, Volvic. It is fascinating to see how, as brands grow in importance, a story emerges that gives the brand heritage and meaning. So, when you drink Perrier, the brand means more than just a drink of water.

"Yoghurt has been packaged, sweetened, flavoured and shaped to suit the tastes of the British consumer. The Ski brand got us into the idea that yoghurt was a healthy foodstuff but this was only the start.

"Leading brands have developed by marketing to us the benefits of friendly bacteria, antioxidants, and bio yoghurts

enriched with juice and fruits, as incentives to improve our daily diets. No longer is yoghurt for 20-something women wishing to diet, it is a convenience foodstuff we are all prepared to eat.

"Brands are developed for specific target markets; sugared cereals are specially designed for children, who have a sweeter tooth, then they are carefully marketed, often using cartoon

characters to get buy-in from young consumers".

Fiona is Chair of *An introduction to retail management and marketing* (B122). In the module, students are introduced to the concept of branding and the theories which explain how branding works in retailing. *The Brands That Feed Us* series is an excellent complement to the module as it gives insight into how brands develop and what it really takes to become a household name.

"The series isn't just aimed at people who are interested in marketing; it's for all of us. Do you drink water? Do you eat cereal or yoghurt? These are the only questions you have to ask yourself."

**To find out more about Fiona's thoughts on brands and marketing, see p40. For more on *An introduction to retail management and marketing* (B122) see p17.**



Figures from 2008 estimated the bottled water industry in Britain to be worth close to £2 billion





*The Story Of Maths* is presented by Professor of Mathematics Marcus du Sautoy

DVDS

# Versatile viewing

Many BBC/OU TV co-productions are also available on DVD, making them ideal for fans, first-time viewers and professional organisations...

● FILLED WITH SURPRISING and intriguing ideas, OU/BBC co-produced programmes are drawing viewers into peak-time television. The subsequent DVD releases are also helping people catch up with the big ideas they may have missed first time round.

OU Worldwide, the OU's commercial arm, releases many OU/BBC series (such as *Coast* and *Fossil Detectives*) on DVD via large distributors. Funding raised by OU Worldwide then goes back into creating cutting-edge modules.

OU Worldwide's surprise hit has been *The Story Of Maths*, a history of mathematics presented by Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, Marcus du Sautoy.

"Two years after it was first broadcast, this series is still our most popular," says Jenny Osborne, Director of Product Sales at OU Worldwide. "Maths

is usually seen as quite a dry or difficult subject, but this series really brought it to life.

"Word of mouth has spread: reviews on Amazon are calling it one the best series they have ever seen and they love how accessible it is to non-mathematicians."

Some DVDs, however, have a more specialised appeal, undertaking investigations into emotive subjects that viewers just can't get elsewhere. For

**"Word of mouth has spread: reviews on Amazon are calling it one the best series they have ever seen"**

example, business guru Gerry Robinson explored the complicated world of dementia care in 2009, shining a light on failings in the system. The series has proved popular with local authorities – so much so that one bought 250 copies for staff training purposes.

Latest release *Eyewitness* also appealed to a niche audience. Jenny says "The DVD questions the reliability of memory in witness testimony, so it was clear that it would be valuable to police authorities and the security industry. The series has been positively reviewed in a criminal law journal and has also sold well to schools."

A range of OU/BBC DVDs can be bought direct from the

OU Worldwide website and many are also available via Amazon. The OU Worldwide website also sells other Open University material such as module materials, study packs and study guides.

Find out more about OU Worldwide at [www.ouw.co.uk](http://www.ouw.co.uk)

Top-selling OU DVDs

## Top 5 DVDs



### THE STORY OF MATHS

Marcus de Sautoy shares the buzz of solving some classic puzzles and explores the most important unsolved problems facing modern mathematicians.



### CAN GERRY ROBINSON FIX DEMENTIA CARE HOMES?

The business expert visits

struggling care homes in a bid to improve the way they are run and make conditions better for vulnerable residents (see p15 for more).



### THE MUSIC OF THE PRIMES

A prize of a million dollars awaits whoever is smart enough to crack one of mathematics' big mysteries. Marcus de Sautoy investigates the distribution of prime numbers.



### EYEWITNESS

Can your memory play tricks on you? Staged crimes and

investigations test whether ordinary people would send the correct person to prison.



### THE BARRISTERS

Just one in five of those who start on the road to becoming a

'brief' will make it. This series follows four students as they try to gain entry to one of the UK's most influential professions.

DVDs are available from [www.ouw.co.uk](http://www.ouw.co.uk)



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## INTERVIEW

# Critical care

Business expert Gerry Robinson tackles the issue of dementia as he looks at the multi-million pound care home industry in the BBC/OU co-production *Can Gerry Robinson Fix Dementia Care Homes?*



● IN THE NEXT 20 years more than a million of us will have dementia, yet dementia care is something we are often reluctant to think about. Businessman Sir Gerry Robinson, whose father had the condition when he died, explores the issue of dementia as he tries to turn around three struggling care homes in the BBC/OU co-production *Can Gerry Robinson Fix Dementia Care Homes?*

## Why did you choose to become involved with this programme?

My involvement was probably stimulated by my father having had dementia. In dealing with him, something in me knew to stay with him rather than to try and bring him back to me. That is now generally accepted to be the right way forward in dealing with people with dementia.

## What do you hope the programme will achieve?

I'm hoping it will make people realise that in dementia care homes it isn't the quality of the curtains or the colour of the carpet or even the fact that it doesn't smell that are important. Those aren't the things that matter. What matters is the loving care that is given.

## What kind of role should people with dementia play in their own care?

There is a huge range of both types of dementia and stages within those types. At the extreme end, some people need to be washed, dressed, fed and are incapable of doing anything by themselves. At the other end, I've seen people who are literally happy cleaning shoes, peeling potatoes, preparing carrots, ironing, washing clothes, etc. When you really examine

behaviour in dementia you can nearly always work out what it is that's going on. For example, somebody who is constantly fiddling with the table cloth has probably had some background either to do with cloth or maybe had something to do with a restaurant. That's what good personal care is about: looking for those things, trying to make those connections.

## What can be done to change the culture of care homes?

If you're going to put a loved one into a home, and clearly that is a necessity at times, you'd better spend a day and actually see what happens. Look to see what kind of care is going on, what kind of connection there is with the residents. How much is being done to keep the residents active, involved, in touch with themselves, feeling part of something, feeling like a home rather than an institution. What will change the way homes operate is the choice of the customer, and the customer is nearly always not the resident but a relation of the resident. It will make us choose homes where this kind of care happens.

What's interesting, of course, is if you run a home very successfully then the economics work because people want to come to the home. I don't have a problem with the profit motive; I have a problem with the profit motive when the profit is earned as a result of skimping and cutting back.

## Do you think we should be prepared to pay to get a better quality of care?

There's an awful lot that can be done that doesn't cost anything at all. I mean the recruitment of the right kind of

person. One has to be realistic. In the UK at the moment we have enormous deficits, so funding isn't going to come easily. My fear for dementia is that you're dealing with a part of the population that has no real say. It's an area we are not very excited about. If this was childcare, I think it would receive far greater attention and therefore probably greater funding. There are no votes in dementia and I think that plays its part in the sums of money being at the lower end rather than at the adequate or high end.

**Can Gerry Robinson Fix Dementia Care Homes? is out now to buy on DVD (see p13). To find out more, see [www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn)**

## Module connection



## An introduction to health and social care (K101)

If you work on the front line of care, this module will build your confidence and skills, and give your career a boost. K101 provides an up-to-date, authoritative overview, with real-life case studies, taking you deep into the experience of receiving care and working in care services.

Registration closes 15 December. Call +44 (0)845 300 6090 or visit [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn) for more information

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# Study

The latest information on new and exciting modules

## NEW MODULE

# Retail therapy

A new retail management and marketing module looks to lift the lid on leading retailers' business practices and offers those working, or wishing to work, in the industry the skills and knowledge to develop their careers...

● THE DYNAMIC AND fast-paced world of retail is reflected in the new Open University Business School Level 1 module *An introduction to retail management and marketing* (B122). This module complements *An introduction to business studies* (B120) and will have relevance to anyone who is working in, or interested in, retail.

Using an innovative mix of materials, the module covers topics which range from store management, customer service and e-retailing to contemporary social issues like sustainability and the environment.

Module Team Chair Fiona Ellis-Chadwick, Senior Lecturer in Retail Management at the OU, says: "Every part of this module is designed with a view to students being able to put into practice tomorrow what they learned today. It can help you use retail theories and concepts to make sense of your practical experience."

Furthermore, the module provides an exciting mix of printed and multimedia study materials, including podcasts with leading retailers, fully interactive online activities, and specialist case studies. These materials are organised into five blocks enabling students to explore the retail environment, store operations, retail



**"Retailing is a fast-paced environment and stores are very good at responding to economic conditions"**

marketing, and the supply chain, and considers contemporary issues likely to affect retailing in the future. Additionally, four themes run throughout the study materials: 1) retail technology, which focuses on the virtual world of e-retailing; 2) the diversity of retail products and sectors; 3) retail ethics and the environmental impact; 4) the

implications of globalisation. Among the online materials are extracts from OU/BBC co-productions such as *Mary Portas: Save Our Shops*; *Theo's [Paphitis'] Adventure Capitalists* and *Virtual Revolution*.

There are also case studies recorded especially for the module that illustrate the practices of leading retailers such as John Lewis and

Waterstones, but also lesser known, yet innovative, retail service providers such as Goldmind, a Hamburg-based market research firm set up by two Open University Business School MBA graduates, and Dream Aid – an e-commerce portal that supports a sustainable approach to online retailing.

"Retailing is a fast-paced environment and stores are very good at responding to economic conditions," says Fiona. "If you take John Lewis or Tesco, they are faced with a situation where the customers do not have much money in their pockets. But you don't see them closing, because they are constantly responding to changes in the environment."

"In the recent recession Sainsbury's and Waitrose developed product ranges very quickly, introducing lower prices and value ranges to meet the customers' changing financial circumstances. These retailers are avid users of information technology so they know instantly what shoppers are buying, even at a localised level."

■ **Module connection**  
*An introduction to retail management and marketing* (B122): registration closes April 2011. For more info, call 0845 300 6090 or visit [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn)

# New modules

Whether you want to develop your career path, retrain or just broaden your horizons, the OU has more than 570 modules for you to try. Here are some of the latest available...



*Youth justice (K209) explores a number of responses to youth offending*

## YOUTH JUSTICE (K209)

### Take up the challenge

Youth justice: theory, research and practice

● IF YOU ARE working in the youth justice field, this module aims to give you a sound knowledge and critical understanding of how theory influences policy and practice in the youth justice system – and is a compulsory module in the Foundation Degree in Youth Justice (England and Wales).

Says Senior Lecturer and Module Team Chair Richard Hester: “All the team members are really excited about this new module because it attempts to integrate theoretical ideas with the challenges of youth justice

practice in a critical but nevertheless empowering way.

“We hope that students find this approach to be stimulating and a focus for critical reflective practice that leads to real change in the system.”

As the module explores comparative youth justice, it may also be attractive to those working in jurisdictions outside England and Wales.

#### ■ Module connection

*Youth justice: theory, research and practice (K209) starts in February 2011 with registration closing on 15 December. To register or for more information call +44 (0)845 300 6090*

## PLANTS AND PEOPLE (S173)

### Fascinating science

The importance of plants in everyday life

● THIS IS ONE of a series of short 10-credit modules introducing fascinating science topics – it explains the importance of plants on a local and global scale, and how they impact on the daily lives of us all.

Dr Carlton Wood, the Module Team Chair, says: “This is a particularly exciting module, given the input from experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Royal Horticultural Society and also the Eden Project.

“The blending of a specially written module book, *Why People Need Plants*, alongside the teaching text ensures that the module will appeal to

anyone who finds plants interesting and wants to find out more about them.

“The module is designed to be taken by students who have no prior knowledge of plants, but we feel it will also appeal to others who have some knowledge.”

Adds Carlton: “Given the fact that I learned fascinating new facts about plants whilst editing the module just shows that to be the case!”

#### ■ Module connection

*Plants and people (S173) next starts in November, with registration closing on 12 November. For more information call +44 (0)845 300 6090*



*Plants are used by humans in many ways*



## ADULT HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING (K217)

## Deepen your understanding

Real-life case material and up-to-date research



K217 will help you better understand the health and social care sector

● **HEALTH AND SOCIAL** care matters, whoever you are – and in *Adult health, social care and wellbeing* (K217) you will learn about how adult health and social care is organised, delivered and experienced across a range of sectors, through exploring real-life case material with up-to-date research, policy and practice.

During the past 20 years the pace of change throughout the UK health and social care

sector has been phenomenal, and looks set to continue – and this module will deepen your understanding of the sector, whether you are involved in paid or unpaid work, use health and social care services yourself, or simply have a general interest in the area.

### ■ Module connection

K217 starts in February 2011; registration closes on 15 December. Call **+44 (0)845 300 6090** for more information.

## INTERMEDIATE ITALIAN (L150)

## Talking Italian

Learn Italian language, society and culture

● **LEARN MORE ABOUT** the language, society and culture of Italy with *Vivace: intermediate Italian*.

Says Module Chair Lucia Debertol: “*Vivace* is the perfect follow-up to *Andante: beginners’ Italian* (L195) and students who successfully complete both modules can claim the Certificate in Italian. The language it teaches is contemporary and authentic.”

This intermediate module revises and consolidates your knowledge of Italian and teaches more advanced language in the context of Italian society and culture.

It also offers insights into many aspects of everyday life



in modern Italy, so you'll have a better understanding of issues that concern Italian people.

### ■ Module connection

*Vivace: intermediate Italian* (L150) starts in February 2011, with registration closing on 15 December. For more information call **+44 (0)845 300 6090**

## Module updates

### Learn Chinese

*Beginners’ Chinese* (L197) will give you the skills you need to speak and understand simple Chinese (Mandarin) in everyday contexts. By the end of the module, students should be able to cope with spoken Mandarin in a wide range of practical situations, such as shopping, socialising and getting around. You'll also have an insight into aspects of China's fascinating culture and history.

*Beginners’ Chinese* (L197) starts in November 2010; registration closes 14 October.



### Environmental concerns

Are you interested in global environmental issues, how humans are changing the planet and are now responding to the difficult challenges this brings?

If so, then *Environment: journeys through a changing world* (U116) is the module for you. It shows how people are seeking positive solutions to environmental challenges locally, in the Arctic, Africa, the Amazon and China.

*Environment: journeys through a changing world* starts February 2011; registration closes 15 Dec.



### Foundation Degree

The OU's *Foundation Degree in Financial Services* (G16) will provide you with a broad and deep understanding of the knowledge and skills that you will need to progress with a career in the financial services industry. You will learn about personal finance – including concepts such as financial planning, portfolio management, investment classes and techniques – and the changing economic and social context for financial decisions and financial services products.



### Experimentation

*Scientific investigations* (S155) is an online module providing an innovative introduction to designing experiments and interpreting results. Collaboration is also important in science and you will work with a small group that, for part of the module, discusses experimental design, collects data and compares results. The 10-credit Level 1 module starts in February with registration closing on 15 December.

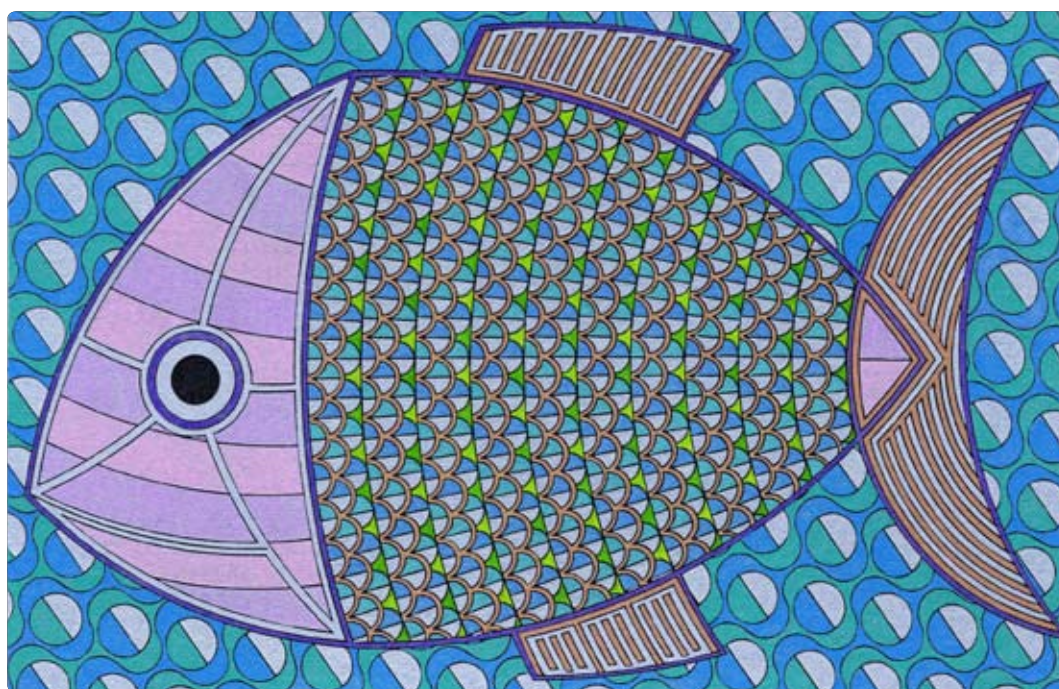
For more information about OU modules, call **0845 300 6090** or visit [www.open.ac.uk/autumn](http://www.open.ac.uk/autumn).

AUTISM MODULE

# Understanding autism

A new module from the OU that explores the autism spectrum has proved hugely popular.

Senior Lecturer in Psychology Dr Ilona Roth explains why...



FISH-E-MK-IV by Peter Myers, one of a number of people on the autism spectrum with artistic talents

● WHEN THE OU launched *Understanding the autism spectrum* (SK124) in 2009, its target was 400 students – in fact the module attracted 1,100.

Although it's reckoned one child in a hundred has some form of autism, this complex condition is still surrounded by confusion and myths.

"There is a massive amount of information out there about autism, but not all is reliable," says Module Chair Dr Ilona Roth, a psychologist and one of a growing cluster of autism researchers at the OU.

"With this module we wanted to provide an authoritative introductory guide, which deals even-handedly with different approaches to explaining and working with autism.

"We also wanted to give students tools for evaluating information, not just in module material but from other sources.

So that, for instance, they can think for themselves about whether a particular treatment has a sound evidence base."

Autism can be a confusing condition. Symptoms often vary from one individual to another (hence the term autism spectrum), and there is no single, simple test to detect it. Instead, it's diagnosed on the basis of psychological characteristics which are known as the 'triad of impairments' or 'triad of difficulties'. The first is difficulties with communication, which can range from quite subtle problems to no language at all. The second is problems with social interactions: making friends and understanding norms of behaviour. The third is a tendency to focus on a narrow range of activities and interests and repeat them – for example, playing with the same toy, or always taking the same route.

But it is important not to think of autism just in terms of impairments, Ilona says. Abilities vary tremendously. "There are a very small group with exceptional gifts – the 'savant' syndrome. Beyond

**"There is a massive amount of information out there about autism, but not all is reliable"**

that there are significant numbers of people across the autistic spectrum who have quite well developed skills in certain areas – such as kids who can do a jigsaw upside down, without having seen the picture on the box."

SK124 considers the psychology and biology, as well as social and educational issues, and the impact of autism on family life. Parents whose child has been diagnosed with

autism face complex decisions, says Ilona. "It is not 'one size fits all'. Should they try to get their child into a specialist school, or will they do best in the mainstream, perhaps with a bit of extra support?"

As well as people affected by autism and their family members, SK124 is ideal for those students, particularly in psychology, and in health, biological and social sciences, who want to know more about autism and what it tells us about the human mind and brain. It also equips them with useful generic skills for assessing scientific research.

"It's a very interactive module," says Ilona. "One of the most popular online features is a 3D revolving brain which comes apart so you can learn about the structure and the function of the brain, and how it is involved in autism."

The SK124 team also had unprecedented access to film in a school for children on the autism spectrum and DVD is one of many resources in this

module: "The student forums have also been very lively," says Ilona. "We have a chat forum where people are exchanging information and it's been wonderful to see parents and people on the spectrum offering advice and mutual support."

Registration for *Understanding the autism spectrum* (SK124) closes 14 October. For more info, call +44(0) 845 300 6090 or visit [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autismn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autismn)



## IMPROVE YOUR CV

# Boost your job prospects

Studying with the OU will enhance your CV and make you a more attractive proposition to employers – but there are also key modules that could significantly increase your job prospects...

● DURING THESE DIFFICULT times it's never been more crucial to become as employable as possible – and some qualifications can improve your 'employability quotient' considerably...

## A CAREER IN IT

Did you know that The Open University is a certified Microsoft IT Academy and a Cisco Academy, which means that certain modules are officially validated by Microsoft and Cisco? Microsoft and Cisco certifications are highly valued in the IT industry.

They provide a good starting point if you wish to enter the industry and a way to maintain your skills and advance your

career if you're already working in IT. *Microsoft server technologies* (TM128), for example, forms part of the requirement for key Microsoft qualifications, and *Cisco Networking (CCNA)* (T216) is a computing and telecoms industry-recognised qualification focused on network communication, and offers employment and career opportunities internationally.

"T216 is an excellent course for anyone wanting to get ahead in networking. The CCNA is a respected qualification within IT, and this course is excellent preparation for those wishing to sit the formal Cisco CCNA," says one former student.

## A CAREER IN BUSINESS

If your ambitions lie more in the business sector, then why not consider studying for an MBA (Masters in Business Administration)? More than 20,000 middle and senior-level managers have graduated with an Open University Business School MBA since its launch in 1989. With a strong international focus, as well as addressing strategic analysis, interdisciplinary skills and independent judgement, the triple-accredited programme ticks all the right boxes for today's global manager.

"The most startling thing that happened when I began the MBA was that it changed my outlook on organisations," says MBA alumnus Des Bourne.

"What impressed me were the practical applications of the tools which I still use today. I learned very theoretical and very academic things: it was great to then take bits and bobs and cobble them together to suit my own circumstances.

"It changed my whole career direction. I came from operations into senior management and the front end of the business."

## A CAREER IN TEACHING

If you're thinking about teaching, then studying for a PGCE (Professional Graduate Certificate in Education) with The Open University can provide the foundations of a successful and rewarding career as a secondary-school teacher. The OU offers a modular PGCE programme that allows flexible patterns of study over up to three years, which will suit those whose circumstances prevent them from taking a

traditional full-time course.

You can get a taste of teaching through the Student Associates Scheme. Students registered on HNC/Ds, foundation degrees, first degrees or doing postgraduate studies can get a 15-day in-depth 'taster' of teaching and life in a secondary school. The scheme covers a range of secondary school subjects. For further information contact [sa-scheme-enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:sa-scheme-enquiries@open.ac.uk)

"The course content itself was fantastic," says a former Education student. "The materials were so varied and so relevant to what I was doing at work. I was able to apply everything I'd learned instantly."

## YOUR EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Maybe you want to make yourself more employable, but don't yet have a clear idea of what path you want to take – then *Making your experience count* (U122) could be what you are looking for. This exciting online module gives you the opportunity to gain 30 points towards higher education qualifications by drawing on your past learning experiences. During a 16-week period, you will learn how to analyse and reflect on these experiences in an academic environment, take stock of your skills and plan for your personal and career development.

The module would suit anyone in paid or voluntary work who is planning a career change, or who wishes to enter or re-enter the labour market.

Highlight the skills that you can develop through your study, and potential career opportunities, by visiting [www.open.ac.uk/careers](http://www.open.ac.uk/careers)



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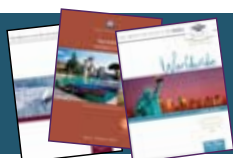
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# People

Everything to do with you, from inspirational stories to fascinating interviews

## ACADEMIC STORY

# Eco-renovation

Eco-renovation may be government policy, but what does it really take to give your house an environmental make-over? An OU academic has been finding out the hard way ...



Richard Blundel and Tina Fawcett outside their renovated Edwardian home

● ECO-RENOVATION, OR retrofitting, is becoming more popular as owners of older homes attempt to make them as energy-efficient as the small stock of new homes being built.

It's also essential if we are to stand any chance of achieving current carbon reduction targets, says Dr Richard Blundel, a Senior Lecturer in Enterprise Development at The Open University Business School. Along with his wife Dr Tina Fawcett, a senior energy researcher at Oxford University, they have spent the past nine years transforming

their home into a more energy-efficient one – a rollercoaster ride with the couple gaining new insights into their own research fields, while struggling with the practical realities of dust, debris and inevitable delays.

Richard says: "We have improved the energy efficiency

**"Around a quarter of homes in the UK are solid wall houses and pretty energy inefficient"**

over a number of years, with the latest changes being the most extensive – the installation

of internal and external solid wall and under-floor insulation, using more environmentally benign products based on hemp and wood fibres.

"The wall insulation is pretty important. Around a quarter of homes in the UK are solid wall houses and pretty inefficient as far as energy is concerned, so insulation is the only real way you can make a difference."

Solar hot water is another useful addition, says Richard: "It didn't cost too much, switches on automatically, and is capable of delivering around half of the hot water we need."

More standard energy-saving features include: condensing gas boiler, extensive loft insulation, double-glazed sash and casement windows, a light pipe, low-energy lights and appliances, wood-burning stove, some use of eco paints and finishes, and two water butts.

The renovation was started primarily for environmental reasons but will it pay off? "A lot of things will pay back quickly,"

says Tina, "but the solid wall insulation probably won't. Our builders were great, but it was

quite expensive, and costing was difficult, particularly where people were working with unfamiliar materials – the old house also produced a few unwelcome surprises. On the positive side, the renovation work solved other problems like damp and mould on the walls.

Tina added: "The long-term drift of government policy is to make very inefficient homes less attractive for people to buy by putting energy labels on them. So I'd hope in a few years' time you would see some kind of capital value increase."

Richard suggests that further growth in the fledgling eco-renovation industry should also help bring costs down during the next few years. "The really big challenge is to increase capacity in the sector: that means developing successful business models that work for a new generation of entrepreneurial builders and for owners of older and less efficient homes. That's going to require a combination of research, new policy initiatives and some fairly dramatic changes on the ground if we are to stand any chance of meeting the government's ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions."

**Take a tour of the house at [www.open.ac.uk/platform](http://www.open.ac.uk/platform)**



Professor Mary Stuart



## INTERVIEW

# An incredible journey

Mary Stuart has been on an incredible academic journey from starting studies at The Open University as an “under-confident” student in the early ’80s to becoming Lincoln University’s Vice-Chancellor...

● IT WAS AFTER being evicted by her landlord while in hospital pregnant with twins that Professor Mary Stuart decided to embark on an Open University degree.

Complications meant she spent the last three months of her pregnancy in hospital, and had to give up her job as a drama teacher on a north London housing estate. Subsequently she and her husband were made homeless when they were evicted from their rented bedsit.

But change and upheaval was not something that affected Mary, for she had lived through the violence of her native South Africa during the 1970s and had played an active role in the anti-Apartheid moment.

Once life had settled down, Mary felt her drama degree was not “fit for purpose” and wanted to get a “proper job”.

“I applied to The Open University because it was the thing that made sense at the time and it did not occur to me to go to another university. I chose social science and my

about time management and guidance for assignments was incredibly detailed, and if you read them carefully you had a good chance at doing well.”

Mary described the experience at the OU as one that “transformed” her and gave her a love of learning, which she wanted to pass on to others. In addition, she saw a clear link between her life in South Africa and the material she was studying on her module.

“My interest in theatre and drama has always been around social issues. When I was in South Africa, I was involved in street theatre during Apartheid. My interest was around the community and seeing it as a way of giving a voice to disempowered people – and creativity does that.

“Sociology explores why there are divisions within society, how society is structured and how different groups do or do not gain advantage in certain circumstances.”

Having gained a First Class Honours Degree, Mary went on to do a doctorate at the OU,

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, which she describes as “an enormous shock”. Mary said: “I have never had a career path. It’s far better to be more aligned with context and therefore be able to take opportunities when they become available.

“People who are rigidly determined spend a lot of time being disappointed. You have to be flexible and adaptable and relaxed about change.

“I grew up in a country that was falling apart and as a child I never thought my country would continue the way it was.

“I grew up knowing that there would be change. You have got to get on with it. Some of those things are big changes and you have to learn to live with the little changes.”

During her time at Sussex, she was involved with setting up a medical school, changing the curriculum and improving the student experience. Before joining Lincoln as Vice-Chancellor, Mary was Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Kingston University.

“Lincoln is an up-and-coming, vibrant institution with a beautiful campus,” she said. “It’s about building on the past and shaping the future. We have a deep commitment to students, absolute quality of the curriculum and engagement with the needs of society and the economy to do thorough research and knowledge transfer.”

This year, the University is starting construction work on the first purpose-built Engineering School in the UK for more than 20 years. She also sees the constraints of funding cuts as an opportunity for Lincoln to build further links

with business. And, although believing there is still a place for traditional campus-based universities, she does have a fondness for the OU.

Mary added: “The OU is regarded in the Higher Education sector as a national treasure. During the last big round of cuts, the OU stood up for itself and fought, and the sector complained that it was being singled out.

“It is highly regarded and valued. My own personal view is that it would be stupid to compete with the OU on distance learning. We can do other forms of mixed delivery. The OU has a special place in my heart because I got a very good education from there.”

**“People who are rigidly determined spend a lot of time being disappointed. You have to be flexible and adaptable”**

personal tutor, Ken Bodfish, was hugely influential in helping me develop and think about myself differently because I had been under-confident about my academic abilities.

“I completely fell in love with social sciences, because it is a language that tells the story of my life and explained what was going on around me. It was wonderful. I learned a lot

before becoming a senior lecturer in special education at Lambeth Community College and then earning a lectureship at the University of Sussex’s Centre for Continuing Education.

After becoming the Associate Director of the centre, she then took over the directorship and turned it round after it had been in deficit for a number of years. Mary was then asked to be a

## Module connection



### Introducing the social sciences – part one (DD131)

This module is an ideal introduction to the social sciences – psychology, social policy and criminology, geography and environment, politics and international studies, economics and sociology – through study of contemporary UK society. It uses a mix of text, audio, DVD and online materials.

Registration closes 14 April. For more information call 0845 300 6090 or visit [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn)

SUPPORT THE OU



Leaving a gift in your Will could enable other people to study with The Open University

# An extra-special gift

Studying with The Open University can be a life-changing event: for some, the difference it makes is so meaningful that they choose to leave a gift to the OU to help others have the same experience...

● **REASONS TO STUDY** are wide and varied, but for some students it can be a real lifeline. Marion Sherwood was married, not working, and studying at some day and evening classes.

A careers analyst suggested that Marion look at studying in a more structured and progressive format, with The Open University. Seizing the opportunity, she embarked on the Arts foundation module (now *The arts past and present* module AA100). It was towards the end of her first year of study, however, that her husband died.

As Marion points out, "Cancer can be very rapid – we're all shown the long-term suffering, but sometimes it's very sudden." After only seven years of marriage, Marion was on her own. She believes that the structures of her OU

study, the TMAs, tutorials and exams, and the people she met, formed a framework for her to keep looking forward rather than back. She continued with her studies, completing her Bachelors degree, then her MA, taking

**“OU study was a sanity-saver. I want my legacy to enable someone else to unlock their potential abilities”**

the odd year off here and there to deal with “real life”. Marion is submitting her thesis on the poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson for her PhD this September (taking some time out from her volunteer roles to concentrate on completing in time).

Marion's passion for The Open University is evident, but it is her belief that her studies are what kept her sane during such a difficult time in her life,

and that is what has led her to decide to leave a gift in her Will to The Open University.

“I want to be able to help someone else, for them to benefit from the experience I had with The Open University.” And it's not just the knowledge

she has gained. “The friendships I have made are amazing – you have such an incredible connection with other students as you're studying – it doesn't matter who you are, where you're from, you share something very special, and that continues long after you finish the course.

“It's no exaggeration to say that, for me, OU study was a sanity-saver. I want my legacy

to enable someone else to unlock their potential abilities.”

## SHARED OPPORTUNITIES

The Open University hopes to continue giving everyone the opportunity to learn. Limited government funding, however, and increasing pressure to raise our fees, means we rely heavily on voluntary donations, including legacies.

When you put your affairs in order by making or updating your Will, leaving a gift to The Open University allows you to pass on a unique experience to someone else. It's an easy and enduring way to help.

**For more information on how you can make a difference by leaving a gift in your Will to The Open University, please contact Karen Hart on +44(0)1908 659141 or email Karen ([k.l.hart@open.ac.uk](mailto:k.l.hart@open.ac.uk))**



# Alcohol advertising



Ross Gordon, Research Associate at the Institute of Social Marketing, discusses alcohol marketing and youth drinking...

● A TOPIC THAT has generated increasing concern in recent years is alcohol. Alcohol plays an important role in UK culture and society.

It acts as a social lubricant, helping people to converse, celebrate, relax and party. Alcohol-related health and social harms, however, are considerable and cost the UK in excess of £25 billion per year. The health harms include increased rates of mortality and disability-adjusted life years,

liver disease, heart disease and cancer but also include lost productivity, crime and disorder and breakdown in family relationships. Given these problems, attention has focused on factors that may contribute to drinking behaviours and alcohol-related harm. One such factor that has been identified is alcohol marketing. The UK alcohol industry spends around £800 million per year on marketing its products and there has been a focus on what impact this has on people's drinking behaviour. Recent reviews of the research have suggested an association between alcohol marketing and youth drinking behaviour. However, there are some gaps in the evidence base. Few studies have examined the impact of new media channels such as websites, social networking and mobile phone/SMS, or other forms of marketing such as sponsorship.

Furthermore, previous studies have not examined the cumulative impact of the wide range of alcohol marketing channels, tending to focus on one or two forms of marketing (normally advertising) in isolation. Also there have been no longitudinal studies, which can help draw stronger inferences on the impact on drinking behaviours, that have been carried out in the UK.

At the Institute for Social Marketing at The Open University (ISM-Open) and the University of Stirling, we have



Many within public health have called for a ban on some forms of alcohol marketing

been conducting research funded by the National Preventive Research Initiative (NPRI) to investigate the impact of alcohol marketing on youth drinking. The study involved a longitudinal cohort survey of young people aged 13, followed up two years later at age 15. Respondents were asked about their awareness of and

number of different marketing channels respondents were aware of) and increased frequency of drinking. These results support the findings from existing research and will stimulate the considerable debate around alcohol marketing.

Many within public health have already called for a ban

**“The alcohol industry in the United Kingdom spends around £800 million per year on marketing its products”**

involvement with alcohol marketing, and alcohol brands, and their attitudes towards alcohol and drinking behaviours. The study found an association between involvement with alcohol marketing (e.g. owning alcohol-branded clothing) and uptake of drinking and increased frequency of drinking. Also the results showed an association between awareness of alcohol marketing (measured by

on some forms of alcohol marketing and a recent House of Commons Health Committee report on alcohol focused on the issue. Identifying the correct policy response will undoubtedly be challenging, but our research demonstrates this is a very much live and interesting topic, set to continue to generate much attention and discussion.

**Find out more about social marketing at [www.open.ac.uk/ism](http://www.open.ac.uk/ism)**

## Module connection



### Marketing and society (B324)

B324 explores the theory and practice of responsible marketing. It examines the impact of established marketing techniques and practices on the promotion of social well-being and behavioural change. You will identify key ethical issues involved in marketing decision making and the responsibilities of organisations to their stakeholders, including the wider community.

Registration closes 14 April.  
Call 0845 300 6090 or visit  
[www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn) for more details.

THANK YOU

# Making a difference

More than 5,000 people made donations to The Open University last year. Their generosity has benefited many students and aided a host of innovative projects...



● THE OPEN UNIVERSITY is extremely grateful to the 5,721 alumni, students, staff, friends, trusts, foundations and corporations who have made a donation or left a legacy to the University between the beginning of August 2009 and end of July 2010. During this period, a total of £1.4m was given to the OU. In addition, during the last year 70 people have informed the OU that they are leaving a gift to the University in their Will.

Philanthropic support is vital to the work of the OU, particularly in the current financial climate. While the University continues to be one of the leaders in supported distance learning, support from donors, trusts, organisations and foundations means the OU can continue to make this level of education accessible to more people in the UK and beyond.

Regular donations through the OU Supporters' Fund raised £650,000, of which £278,000

went to student support. The remaining money has been used to contribute funds towards 16 innovative projects (below), ranging from international development work to community partnerships, and cover diverse academic areas.

## 1 Gaelic Studies

This project aims to produce a unique OpenLearn (see p8) unit on the history, geography and culture of Scottish Gaelic with the aim of promoting awareness and interest in the language. The unit can be used as a stand-alone learning resource or downloaded and customised by the growing number of schools and organisations with a commitment to securing the status of Gaelic in Scotland.

## 2 HEAT regional roll-out

The OU is helping address the critical shortage of skilled health workers in Africa through its Health Education

and Training (HEAT) programme. Working in partnership with UNICEF, AMREF and the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health, the OU is supporting the upgrading of the country's 31,000 Health Extension Workers to diploma level. Crucially, a distance learning approach means that the students can remain working in their health posts, continuing to deliver services to their communities while studying.

## 3 Biodiversity Mentors

iSpot is a website created by The Open University with the objective to teach people how to find, study and record the plants and animals found in their local area. The donated funds will provide Biodiversity Mentors who will promote an interest in nature and the use of iSpot among the general public in Wales, Ireland and Scotland (where there is currently no support), fostering

key links and partnerships with local wildlife enthusiasts and organisations.

## 4 Transforming Science Higher Education In Ethiopia

The aim of this project is to help alleviate the severe shortfall of PhD graduates in Ethiopia, which in its current state has an impact not only on the quality of teaching that universities can offer but also on research capability and community service. The monies generously provided will allow four OU academics to teach on a postgraduate module in Ethiopia.

## 5 Climate Change Policy, Vulnerability and Forest Communities

This project will provide funding for research student Elvin Nyukuri's project, which examines how policies to address climate change bear directly on the future of socially and economically vulnerable communities, such as forest communities in Kenya and Uganda. The project will also contribute practical as well as theoretical insights to climate change and development.

## 6 Building on History: Religion in London

This project seeks to enhance the historical self-understanding of the Church of England diocese of London and its congregations and clergy. It aims to relate current academic knowledge of religious and social history to the needs of the present-day church, particularly as it seeks to understand its place in London's diverse and multicultural community. [www.open.ac.uk/buildingonhistory](http://www.open.ac.uk/buildingonhistory)



**7 MUPPLE**

The monies received for this project will allow OU academics to undertake research on 'digital personal learning environments', which have changed dramatically in recent years.

**8 Personal Privacy Requirements in Information Exchange**

There are currently growing concerns regarding the lack of individual awareness and control over personal privacy and information management. The monies received will enable a research student to undertake a study into the way the users of a large organisation perceive their own privacy-related requirements and behaviours, and how these align with current practices of information exchange.

**9 Development of a new Integrated Vocational Route (IVR) in Health and Social Care**

This project will develop an integrated Health and Social Care (HSC) route which combines the strengths of a tried and tested supported open learning education with a rigorous, user-friendly means of assessing work-based competence. The new IVR will enable students studying the Level 1, 60-credit module *An Introduction to Health and Social Care* (K101) to concurrently register for an integrated Vocational Diploma in HSC.

**10 Developing Open Educational Resources (OER) to enhance leadership skills in the social purpose sector**

There is a clear need for greater availability of Open Educational Resources (OERs) to help develop the leadership and management skills of trustees, managers and volunteer workers in the social purpose sector. Funding received will be used to make relevant OERs more widely available to this sector.

**11 Studying while you care**

Dedicated resources for students with caring responsibilities were developed in Student Services in 2005 and a network of staff contacts across the regions and nations has since been developed. The new funds will contribute to raising awareness of the project as well as ensuring that effective links are established with outside organisations that promote the interest of carers.

**12 Practice and Professional Learning Environment (PePLE)**

This project aims to provide social workers with a site of text-based and video resources that can be used as a continuing learning resource. Access to the site is free and we are hoping social workers can contribute to how the site develops. Please email [peple-project@open.ac.uk](mailto:peple-project@open.ac.uk) for more information on this project.

**13 Capitalising our International Development CPD potential: developing a sustainable Africa-based pathway**

This project aims to create new partnerships and develop new ideas in Africa to provide further mechanisms in education and training in both the private and public sectors.

The particular focus of this project is to develop the ability, and build the capacity, of other training institutes in Africa, to deliver continuing professional development (CPD) training in the area of international development management, policy and practice.

The Open University is generating significant demand for CPD offerings in the areas of health services management, science, technology and innovation policy and management as well as pro-poor business management. Demand is drawn from a variety of sectors including the UN, African governments and international non-governmental organisations.

**14 University in the community**

This project aims to build on existing community support to develop sustainable partnerships in the South West region. Building on a successful venture in Bristol, this project aims to make The Open University a trusted and valued partner to raise aspirations and help overcome the educational barriers faced by many people in this region.

**15 REAP (Realise the Potential of the ARC Programme)**

The Open University supports a broad range of academic partnerships, including the engagement with Affiliated Research Centres (ARC). Doctoral training is provided in partnership with major research institutes from the public and private sectors in the UK and around the world. The donated funds will help develop closer research links and strengthen elements of the partnership through joint bidding for funding and shared support for doctoral projects and resources.



**16 India One Million** aims to make high-quality distance learning materials freely available to at least one million teachers in India during the next five years, vastly improving their resources and developing their skills.

Having worked in partnership with Delhi University, the OU has explored the potential of a mentoring approach to teacher development in combination with flexible learning materials that draw on a range of innovative teaching strategies. This is a unique opportunity to shape and nurture the next generation of school teachers in India, benefiting millions.

## Thank you

*Thank you to all those who have donated to the OU. To see the full list of donors who have supported The Open University during the 2009/10 year, see [www.open.ac.uk/fundraising](http://www.open.ac.uk/fundraising)*

Particular gratitude goes to the following donors who are members of the **Vice-Chancellor's Gold Circle**, who have made gifts totalling £5,000 or more: Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, The Comino Foundation, Dr E C Dunn, The Eranda Foundation, Ethiopiaid, The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Gatsby Foundation, Mrs J Hunt, The Roger and Jean Jefcoate Charitable Trust, Sir James Knott Trust, Mrs Y Perret, P F Charitable Trust, The David and Elaine Potter Foundation, Santander, The Shears Charitable Foundation, The Waterloo Foundation, and two anonymous donors.

Thanks also extend to the **Vice-Chancellor's Circle** members, who have donated £1,000 or more: Mr G Ahier, Mr and Mrs M Bean, Dr D Day, Mr J Devlin, Dr J Drysdale, Mr I Dykes, Mrs G Goodwin, Sir B and Lady Gough, Lord Haskins, Mr P Hewitt, Miss D Hind, Mr I Johnson, Mr M Lugton, Mr S Morris, Mr F Neale, Mr D Poultny, Ms G Rumley, Mr R Staines, Mr M Steen OBE, Dr D Speller, Thriplow Charitable Trust, Mr P Todd, and an anonymous donor.

**If you would like to find out more about these projects or how your donation could help other key areas of The Open University and students, then please contact Siobhan Finegan on +44 (0)1908 655044 or email [s.m.finegan@open.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.finegan@open.ac.uk)**

SUPPORT THE OU

# Child development

Yvonne Perret's long-standing relationship with the OU and child education began when she received a gift to begin studying. Forty years later she has now given a financial gift to the OU, aiding children's research...



Yvonne's donation has helped develop children's research at the OU

● “INSTEAD OF MAYBE French knickers and perfume, my husband presented me with an envelope one Christmas. With curiosity I opened it,” says Yvonne Perret. “Without my knowledge he had enrolled me with The Open University and I did not immediately appreciate what a wonderful gift he had given me. I had discovered a treasure-trove.”

That's how Yvonne Perret's long relationship with The Open University began 40 years ago. After her student journey to further her career in teaching, Yvonne is now supporting the OU's Children's Research Centre to help gifted and talented children fulfil their potential, while she continues to work as an independent consultant in Gifted Education.

Yvonne arrived from Australia in 1962 and married her husband Geoffrey in 1964, subsequently joining the County Advisory Reading Team. Geoffrey thought that to have credibility in the workplace Yvonne would need further qualifications – hence the unexpected Christmas gift.

Yvonne's journey with The Open University encompassed reading and language diplomas as an Associate Student, and after a gap of a year she enrolled on a BA degree course, graduating at a ceremony in Birmingham.

“I thought that thanks to the great support of tutors and my husband, and a fair amount of work, I now had credibility within the workplace. At this stage I was asked to head a

small team in giving schools, teachers and pupils support in special needs. After a very short time headteachers were asking for help with children showing behavioural difficulties. It will not surprise people today that 80 per cent of those children whom I met, talked with and assessed, achieved scores that showed them to be above the 95th percentile. They were gifted and talented. My best way to help these children, teachers and parents seemed to return to the treasure-trove once more.

“The confidence the OU gave me meant that when I joined the National Committee of NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) for two years, I did not feel out of place.”

And after an interesting career, Yvonne decided to make a financial donation to The Open University.

“Yvonne's endowment has been enormously helpful in the development of our work at the Children's Research Centre (CRC),” says the OU's Mary Kellett, Professor of Childhood and Youth.

“Our goal is to provide quality training for children and support them to undertake their own

presented their research at national platforms including the Cabinet Office. The approach has been shown to be particularly effective in gifted and talented education, and Yvonne's money has enabled us to employ a research associate for three years and run four school-based projects.

“Yvonne's passion for gifted and talented education fits well with OU goals. Her donation has enabled us to demonstrate how innovative and effective this approach is in facilitating personalised learning and fostering creativity. Designing and leading their own research provides able children with opportunities to develop organisation and management skills rarely possible with traditional curricula. Yvonne has been delighted to observe what a difference her support has made.

“Donations like those from Yvonne are vital for the continuance of research such as ours and dozens of children have benefited. They, and all of us at the CRC, would like to say a big thank you to Yvonne for her generous support and hope that the children's research

**“Our goal is to provide quality training for children and support them to undertake their own research studies”**

research studies. This has two principal benefits: it greatly enhances their learning and it builds a body of original research from children's perspectives, a current gap in our knowledge of childhood and children's lives.

Several children have had work published and have

studies published on the CRC website (now numbering more than 100) do justice to her dedication to this field.”

**For further information on how you could support this or other OU projects, please contact Siobhan Finegan on 01908 655044 or email [S.M.Finegan@open.ac.uk](mailto:S.M.Finegan@open.ac.uk)**



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## CONTINUING OFFERS

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OU Honorary Graduate

and wine correspondent Jancis Robinson is offering discounted membership to her wine website for a price of £49 (usually £69) for 12 months. With thousands of articles, 40,000 wine reviews, news and friendly forums, it's a must for wine aficionados.

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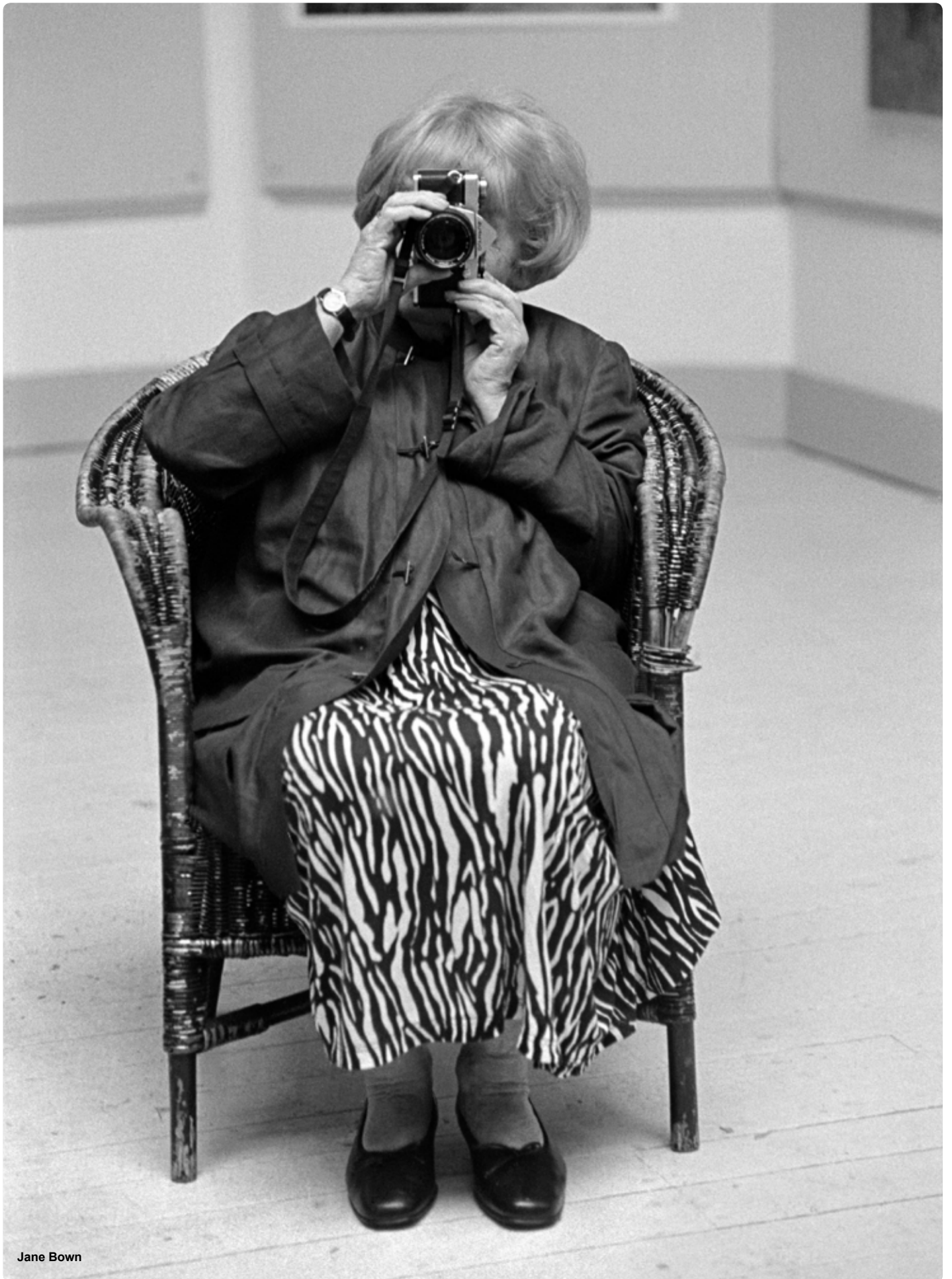
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Jane Bown



## INTERVIEW

# Life through a lens

A 60-year photography career has seen OU Honorary Graduate Jane Bown aim her camera at a string of famous faces including pop stars, actors, a president, numerous prime ministers, a pope and the Queen, ...

● THE ICONIC BLACK-and-white photographs that span six decades tell the story of Jane Bown's remarkable career at the *Observer* newspaper.

Yet, with typical modesty, Open University Honorary Graduate Jane says it was not her that made the unforgettable images possible but her subjects from the worlds of art, literature, music and politics.

Her career began just after the Second World War as she was being demobbed as a Wren (Women's Royal Naval Service), when a friend suggested that she became a photographer. Jane said: "I rang around to do a full-time course and eventually I gained a place at Guildford School of Art. There were lots of ex-air force people there and my tutor I for Thomas said 'seeing as you're a Wren, you can have a place'. I had never taken a picture in my life and had never held a camera."

Starting with a Gandolphi camera, Jane says she didn't get on well with photography and was "pretty useless" for the first two terms. But then she swapped cameras to a

Jane went to London to begin her career, working for agencies, when one day in 1949 she received a telegram from the *Observer* to photograph Bertrand Russell having breakfast. "I was petrified, but I did it," she said.

"On the first few jobs I took some lights with me, but soon I wasn't using them. You can always find light. I was unusual, not only because of that, but because in those days there were not many women. I don't think I knew what I was doing.

"I was always anxious before any job, because of who the subjects were. The door opens and you wonder what you are going to see. But I have got very quick reactions and, being a Pisces, good instinct. I never planned pictures.

"People don't feel threatened by me. I used to turn up with a camera and no lights, unlike photographers have today. I used to travel very light and I didn't look like a photographer."

An example of a completely unplanned picture which paid dividends was when Pope John Paul II visited the UK in 1982.

One of her famous recent pictures was of the Queen on her 80th birthday. Jane, who was awarded an MBE which was later upgraded to a CBE, said: "That was meant to be a joke. I said to the *Observer*, wouldn't it be marvellous if we could phone up the Queen and have her picture taken. We put in a request for the Queen to have a photograph taken on her 80th birthday by another 80-year-old. The next day a phone call came back and she said she would like to do it.

"The light was beautiful and I found a chair for her to sit in. I got a good light and I was relaxed. The Queen is quite a photographer herself and she was quite interested. She said, I have noticed you have taken two films, would you like to take another? I said, 'yes, thank you'."

Over the years, Jane has taken a large number of photographs of politicians. One of her favourites is a 1957 shot taken from behind of Labour politicians Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan walking along the Brighton seafront. Despite being "slightly unnerved" before photographing Margaret Thatcher, Jane said she found her "very kind, courteous and obedient". She liked Gordon Brown, "friendly, very, very nice and very easy"; David Cameron was "very pleasing", however, Jane isn't so complimentary about Tony Blair who was "very pleased with himself – very arrogant." One politician who particularly benefited from Jane's photography was Richard Nixon, who was taken outside Claridges.

"I was crouching down and as he went past, I shouted out something like 'Mr Nixon

over here'. He said 'got it?' and I said 'no' and he turned around again and he said 'got it?' and I said 'got it!'"

Jane added: "I think people are okay as long as you don't take up too much time. I get quite excited, they get interested, I enthuse, and that makes them feel better. I do enthuse. It's not put on.

"There's only one way to do it. I was always short of time. I had to get them in a good light so that the light was shining in their eyes. I like the pictures that were not portraits. I did not want to be a portrait photographer, but I became one."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/interactive/2009/oct/22/jane-bown-photography>

## Module connection



### Digital photography (T189)

Whether you're new to digital photography or want to improve existing skills, this 10-week online module will develop your ability to create and share digital images. If you're just starting out, you'll be able to compare notes with many other people in the same situation. The module will develop your technical, visual and creative skills.

Registration closes 24 September. Call 0845 300 6090 or visit [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn)

**"You have to be very alert, very receptive and very instinctive. I just watched. It's not that difficult"**

Rolleiflex and took pictures during a holiday on Dartmoor.

"It must have been the camera and it was just so amazing," she said. "I started taking photos and I had a seeing eye. I saw things that I looked at and took photos. When I came back, I for said 'you need a portfolio of 10 beautiful pictures and you can go around the world'."

"They did a walkabout and he was doing a big meeting at Wembley. All the photographers were in a line at about 10am. Then I noticed there was a big pen which was empty and I waited there. And he came out and he put his hands out and I got a beautiful shot. You have to be very alert, very receptive and very instinctive. I just watched. It's not that difficult."

## ECONOMY

# National performance

Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management Howard Viney looks at the impact of the World Cup on the English economy and what arranging a major sporting tournament really means to the host nation...

● **WORLD CUP SUMMERS** are always hugely anticipated by football fans, but less so by their employers. Important games can be a significant distraction and can potentially impact upon performance and productivity. On the other hand, World Cups and other major sporting events are usually accompanied by analysts' assessments suggesting that they boost economies and raise morale. So perhaps organisations should welcome them.

A friend of mine works for Merrill Lynch, one of the world's leading financial management and advisory companies. He says that during the 2010 World Cup monitor screens that usually display the movements of markets around the world would show all the football games being played, not only the England games (reflecting the international nature of their workforce).

The implication is obvious: there is a risk of employees being distracted by a lack of score information. Merrill Lynch has clearly weighed the risks, and decided to facilitate access to games in the hope that this would reduce the risks to them of poor performance and reduced productivity.

And the risks increase if the timing of crucial or attractive fixtures coincides with the working day. In this sense, the 2010 World Cup has been

relatively kind to UK plc. England's early group games were both played at 7.30pm and the last-16 game against Germany took place on a Sunday. This is a much happier prospect for organisations than, for example, the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea, when one England game kicked off at 7.30am (and was watched in pubs across the country at that time by people trying to decide whether or not they should have a pint and how late they could arrive for work). The importance of this issue for business can be seen from media coverage of England's final group game with Slovenia, which kicked off at 3pm on a Wednesday and was accompanied by comments from employers' associations asking employees to consider the potential impact upon the economy of leaving early to watch the game. The TUC advised: "To avoid any

**“Sporting success can contribute to a sense of national euphoria and increased motivation and work rate”**

tensions, bosses should discuss the issue with their staff. We would encourage them to let people watch the games if they like, and then claim back their time afterwards. That way, everyone wins.”

But what about the positive side of England's progress to



the last 16? Sporting success can contribute to a sense of national euphoria that psychologists have associated with increased motivation and work rate, and rather than reducing performance as a consequence of hangovers and additional 'sick days',

sporting success can produce enhanced performance and productivity. A report by The Social Issues Research Centre prior to the 2006 World Cup suggested that as many as 70 per cent of men and 62 per cent of women sampled thought a good performance by England would boost their

morale and hence have a positive impact upon their work performance (although we should note that academic evidence to support this finding is less convincing).

There is also the potential benefit of demand for goods and services. Retail analysts Verdict suggested that the UK economy would benefit by £1.3bn from this World Cup, as shoppers stocked up on food, drink, and assorted World Cup merchandise, and many retailers have used the World Cup as part of their marketing activities. For example, one retailer offered flat screen TV customers their purchases for free if England were to go on to win the World Cup. Other sectors, like DIY and cinemas, however, were fearing a downturn in demand.





So there will always be economic winners and losers, and a need to balance risk and reward. If England had prospered, there would have been more games, and more distraction and absenteeism. But during such a scenario, employees might have worked harder and more creatively.

The extent of the negative impact of England's inglorious demise on the UK's recovery from recession will be for later economists to assess.

#### HOST BENEFITS

I was fortunate enough to have been in South Africa for the opening stage of the World Cup, so perhaps I should close by looking at the potential impacts of hosting a major tournament – particularly given the impending London 2012

Olympics and the England 2018 World Cup bid.

The prospect of many additional visitors obviously brings the potential for considerable benefits for the tourism and hospitality sectors. The South African government announced that in the first two weeks of June 2010 a total of 456,423 foreigners entered the country needing somewhere to sleep, eat and drink, and to keep themselves entertained when not watching football.

Initial estimates suggested that the impact on the South African economy may be worth approximately £578.5m during the duration of the competition. Walking around Ellis Park and Soccer City, the amount of money generated by independent vendors selling national flags and vuvuzelas

would seem likely to account for at least half of that total.

The positive impact, however, has again varied by sector. One that was not doing as well as expected was the hotel sector, which despite the influx of visitors was reporting considerable vacancies. One explanation is that it appears that a higher proportion of visitors were of the budget rather than the luxury variety and while B&Bs and hostels were full, hotels were not.

The key question to be answered is whether it is possible to achieve long-term value for money for the huge amounts of initial investment required to host the event. Some estimates suggest South Africa plc spent R40bn on preparing for the competition. South Africans I spoke to expressed

the view that the main long-term benefit to the nation was likely be felt in terms of an enhanced transport infrastructure, but some analysts have suggested that the competition has created a new professional infrastructure as well; a generation of skilled, and now experienced, service industry professionals upon which South Africa's future economic development may be based.

Additionally, and especially given the success of the competition, hosting the tournament will have reinforced perceptions of South Africa as a place to visit and possibly as a place to do business.

Howard is Module Team Chair on *Strategy* (B820), which explains what business strategy entails. [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn)

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# Research

A round-up of the latest research news from The Open University

## HUMANITIES RESEARCH

# Digitised books

Google project maps out location and literature...

● **GOOGLE ANCIENT Places**, a joint project between the OU, the University of Southampton and the University of California at Berkeley, has received funding from Google to explore digitised literature.

Google has committed nearly \$1 million to support digital humanities research over two years.

During the next year, Google will provide selected subsets of the Google Books corpus (scans, text and derived data such as word histograms) to both the researchers and the rest of the world, as laws permit.

Google Ancient Places will let users search for books related

to a specific geographic location during a particular time period, which will then be visualised on Google Earth or Google Maps.

Academics will be able to access data compiled from a broad swathe of literature, including much out of print and rare material often held by just a small number of institutions.

Researchers believe the project will open up interest in history, classics and archaeology, and help develop new tools and research methods as well as expertise in using data in this way.

[www.open.ac.uk/Arts/news/index.shtml](http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/news/index.shtml)



Academics will be able to access data from rare material

## Other news

### Feeling the heat

● **A TEAM OF** astronomers led by a group at The Open University has found that the hottest planet ever discovered, WASP-12b, is being consumed by its host star. The discovery brings us greater understanding of the formation and evolution of planetary systems. The research has been published in *The Astrophysical Journal*. To read more about this research, see <http://oro.open.ac.uk/21403/>

### Exploring in the dark

● **MEMBERS OF THE** OU's Computing department are working with visually impaired performance artists in an immersive theatre project. This innovative collaboration between engineers, artists and academics saw more than 100 participants explore a tactile and audio environment in the pitch dark using advanced sensory technology. [www.thequestion.org.uk](http://www.thequestion.org.uk)

### Mind your language

● **RESEARCHERS ACROSS** Europe, including Anne Stevens, Senior Lecturer in Modern Languages at the OU, have found that the use of English in social networking sites is creating a threat to the learning of other languages, formal English and even learners' first languages. Find out more about the research findings of this EC initiated study at: <http://www.ea.gr/ep/study/>

### New business survey request

● **IF YOU HAVE** graduated from the OU within the past two years and have started your own business, then we would like to invite you to take part in an annual survey. The Higher Education Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) Survey is run by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Access the survey here <http://survey.euro.confirm.it.com/wix/p429141257.aspx>



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# New year, new you

The winter issue of Sesame will be available  
to view online from 6 January



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to view the winter, and all previous issues, online



## RESEARCH

# Experts in the field

Find out how top-ranked research conducted by all faculties of the OU makes an impact in many areas of everyday life, from astronomy and business to health and social care...

● ONE KEY AREA of The Open University, and one highly relevant to whatever your area of study or former study, is the extensive academic research that is conducted globally. And with research being carried out by all of the academic units, it is no exaggeration to say that research informs many key aspects of the University.

The work conducted in the various fields seeks not only to make a major contribution to specific intellectual disciplines, but focuses on key issues that affect society, industry, cultures, economies and nations. As well as the signature research programmes hosted at the OU's main Walton Hall campus, the OU research community is enhanced by

Open University research continues to break new boundaries and contributes to the sum of human knowledge. For example, equipment developed for the Beagle mission to Mars in 2003 will now be used to develop clinical trials of a new diagnostic technique for tuberculosis, a disease which affects an estimated nine million people a year.

Climate change mitigation is a priority for the OU: one related project has academics helping to develop a charging infrastructure for electric cars, which are expected to become widely available in the UK by 2013. The project links with eight other related activities in cities across the UK and involves collaboration with

computing research. Working closely with the UK's National Air Traffic Services (NATS), researchers in computing at the OU have been studying the security implications of introducing new technologies such as GPS on aircraft.

Another research partnership is the e2v Centre for Electronic Imaging (CEI), a £3m partnership between The Open University and e2v, a world leader in the design and supply of image sensors to organisations such as NASA (e.g. the upgrade of the Hubble space telescope). CEI is researching and developing advanced technologies for space and terrestrial electronic image sensing.

Some other areas of research are finance and business, autism, brain injury, childhood, health and social care, renewable energy, art, history, religion and geography, to name but a few.

OU academics are also asked for expert comment, such as when the Icelandic ash cloud disrupted European air space earlier this year. National and international news media turned to OU volcanologists Dr David Rothery and Dr Hazel Rymer to provide technical information based on their extensive research into volcanic activity. The OU was also called upon to advise the Secretary of State for Transport on the disruption which saw many travellers stranded. Additionally, the long-standing partnership with the BBC means that OU research is shared with a truly global audience through well-known programmes such as *Child Of Our Time*, *The Money Programme* and *Coast*.

## It is no exaggeration to say that research informs many key aspects of The Open University

collaborations with top-ranked institutions throughout the UK and around the world.

"It is easy to see only the amazing teaching contribution of The Open University," says Professor Brigid Heywood, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise). "But underpinning that rich educational framework is world-class research that is people-centred and problem-focused. The relevance and effectiveness of our teaching and research is secured by a diverse range of interactions with key government agencies, strategic partnerships with major commercial organisations and projects which serve the needs of 'local' communities."

councils, car manufacturers and electricity companies.

OU research and enterprise partnerships are not limited to purely commercial ones. Health and social care researchers have teamed up with the charity Care & Repair England and Loughborough University to study people's lives in relation to their kitchens, focusing on individuals in their 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s living in Bristol and Loughborough. The project will produce guidance for people to adapt their kitchen to match their changing abilities and needs as they age, with modifications for a range of physical and cognitive disabilities.

The emphasis on functional design is a feature of OU



To find out more about Open University research, visit [www.open.ac.uk/research](http://www.open.ac.uk/research)

# Brand appeal

From soap and supermarkets to cars and clothing, brands are crucial, cherished and omnipresent.

Senior Lecturer in Retail Management

Fiona Ellis-Chadwick talks to *Sesame* about the grip that brands have on consumers...

● BRAND IS MORE critical than ever before, whether it is that of a product or a company. Billions are spent on advertising in the UK and around the world each year, with the aim of encouraging consumers to part with their cash in exchange for their products. But is the relationship that simple? How is a commodity massaged, maintained and stoked to create a brand that can be seductive to consumers? And why do brands matter to the consumer when high cost does not necessarily equate with a better quality product when compared with a cheaper alternative?

Senior Lecturer in Retail Management Fiona Ellis-Chadwick answers these and more questions as her new module *An introduction to retail management and marketing* (B122) is launched and BBC/OU co-production *The Brands That Feed Us* airs later this year.

## How do companies go about maintaining brand heritage?

In essence, a brand's heritage is its life history and the surrounding success stories associated with the development of the brand.

Think about Birds Eye vegetables, frozen within a few hours of being picked to retain maximum goodness and flavour. The brand's position in the marketplace is built on the heritage that has developed from more than '60 years of providing healthy natural foods'. Maintaining the heritage of a brand like Birds Eye is the easy part – if a business has a good

story to tell about its business, a focused marketing strategy should ensure business activities constantly add value and interest to the story of the brand. Birds Eye now concentrates on sustainability and customers that assures it can provide 'forever food'.

Birds Eye has pioneered the development of freezing technology to extend the shelf life of food and reduce food wastage. In this way, everything the company does adds to the brand's heritage and so remains of interest to the consumer.

Birds Eye brings two types of new products to the market: evolutionary products and products that are completely new. The Birds Eye Simply range brought a new way to cook fish to the marketplace, making it easy and convenient for consumers to prepare their food.

Consumers make associations between the new product and

## “A focused marketing strategy should ensure business activities constantly add value and interest to the brand”

the established brand through the core values and characteristics of the existing products. This then gives the consumer confidence to try the new product. Providing the company has done its homework and understands which benefits the customer is looking for, then the new products can quickly become well established. Not all products are completely new to market; some are evolutionary



Well-known brands like Marmite take calculated marketing risks

products, which are replacing existing products – for example, Sony's PlayStation 3 replacing the PS2 or additions to existing product lines from yoghurts with Omega-3 to mouthwash with

spread you won't grow out of and 'My Mate Marmite'. The 'love it, hate it' campaign came about when it was discovered that people really do either love or hate the product. It was a bold move to use this as a campaign but it worked.

I worked on a recent BBC/OU production *Theo's Adventure Capitalists*, where Theo Paphitis followed the fortunes of UK companies entering emerging markets in Brazil, Vietnam and India. Marmite was one of the companies entering the India market but, interestingly, the consumers there generally hated Marmite as a savoury spread (which is its key market in the UK). The marketing team were not thwarted by this rejection: they investigated the market, discovered that Indian mums are passionate about making sure that their children

cooling crystals that promise extra freshness.

## How innovative, and risky, was the Marmite 'love it or hate it' campaign?

Marmite is a brand built on very clear nutritional benefits. Made from brewer's yeast, the product was first introduced in UK in 1902. In the 1970s Marmite's advertising featured heart-warming images and the straplines, 'The growing up





have a nutritious diet. The team worked with celebrity chefs and discovered that Marmite as an ingredient was of great interest.

I think this innovative approach when entering the Indian market is indicative of the brand throughout. From how the company uses social marketing to follow where its consumers are online, to close-to-the-edge advertising (the much complained-about but not banned Marmite life-saving kiss on the beach), Marmite is innovative and has an eye on where the market is going, rather than taking uncalculated risks.

#### How has Apple managed to create almost a consumer frenzy about its brands?

Apple has a special ingredient, which it uses very effectively to whip up interest in its new products: CEO Steve Jobs.

It has been said that when Apple launches new products, while Jobs talks the press listen. But as soon as he stops

### “Backed up with co-ordinated marketing campaigns, Apple is able to have consumers salivating”

speaking their interest wanes. Jobs is charismatic: when he takes to the world stage to launch a new product he is able to create anticipation. Backed up with coordinated marketing communication campaigns, Apple is able to have consumers salivating in anticipation. But don't forget, the company designs products which also deliver.

#### Why do people pay more for the brand?

Design, quality, performance,

status, image. Think about buying a cotton T-shirt. You might argue that there is no great difference between an

Armani garment at say £80 and a T-shirt from a supermarket range selling at £5. Well, let's imagine you are buying a gift for your boss who has just been promoted. How would you decide which would be the most appropriate gift? Would it be price? The impression you want to make? What does the choice of gift say about you?

Different people look to brands for different things. Some individuals choose luxury brands – aspirational products that say everything about who

they are, where they belong, their social standing – which they perceive determines how they are defined by their peers. Other individuals reject any such association with brands.

BMW is an example of a brand which positions its high-performance cars as something we should all aspire to owning. In return, BMW gives performance and reliability, and that *je ne sais quoi* which says so much about BMW owners.

#### Is there a delicate balance establishing a product or company that is pitched as cheap and cheerful but offers value?

The price/value evaluation keeps the consumer's attention when deciding which products to buy. Some of us constantly seek the ultimate bargain, the product which we feel offers such good value that it's a steal at the price it is being sold at.

From manufacturer to retailer, it is important to get the balance right. If the price is too high, sales are unlikely to reach maximum market potential – and the same is likely to be true if quality is too low. Get it wrong the other way round, high quality and price too low, and demand will quickly outstrip supply. So there is a delicate balance but there is space in the market for low-quality/low-price products.

Remember the student's staple foods, the 10p own-label value supermarket brand tins of beans, tomatoes, etc. Aldi, Lidl and other discount retailers have benefited in the recent global recession from shoppers trading down and choosing price and value-for-money produce over high-quality goods and extended product ranges offered by the four big supermarkets.

#### Do brands illustrate class divides?

Yes and no. On the one hand targeted marketing enables product manufacturers and distributors to pitch products to specific sectors of a population.



BMW is an example of an aspirational brand

Take vodka: Smirnoff Red Label vodka is Diageo's biggest selling brand of spirits. Diageo is the world's largest beer, wine and spirits company and sells premium brands such as Guinness, Gordon's Gin, Johnny Walker Scotch whisky. Red Label Smirnoff is the market-

with spirits for the first time tend to choose low-cost brands of vodka rather than paying for the more expensive brands. So age too can be an indicator of the brands we choose.

Finally, if there is a sales promotion on a particular brand, then different target markets will

## “Even in some of the remotest parts of the globe there are certain levels of brand awareness”

leading brand and Diageo spends more than £1 billion a year on advertising in order to create the 'right' image for the drinkers of its brands.

Glen's Vodka is targeted at less affluent members of society, whereas Grey Goose is positioned to attract the more discerning and affluent customers. So it could be argued that the vodka we drink defines our social class.

On the other hand, however, young drinkers experimenting

also be drawn towards the product: for example, Bailey's Original Irish Cream Liqueur. On balance, the brands we buy do provide some clues about the people we are but they do not necessarily provide a definitive answer to identifying social class.

### Are there people who are not susceptible to brands?

I doubt it very much: even in some of the remotest parts of the globe there are certain

levels of brand awareness.

In a typical day we are exposed to hundreds of branded communication messages from manufacturers, distributors and retailers. The question is, to what extent do we hear and respond to these messages?

Martin Lindstrom's [*a brand guru*] fascinating study into 'what makes consumers tick' reveals that our emotions play a very important part in how we behave as consumers. His study used neuro-imaging to find out what goes on in our heads when we encounter brands and make product choices. According to Lindstrom, brand manufacturers like Christian Dior have been using neuro-marketing to bring their new products to market.

### Do you think we will ever reverse our status of being a throw-away culture?

Many of today's mega-brands have benefited from this ethos – Ikea's marketing campaign 'chuck out the chintz today' springboarded the brand forward. Home makeover and reality DIY shows have encouraged generations of homeowners to throw away and replace in order to achieve just the right look in the home. I think certain sectors of the market are getting bored with the throw-away approach to living and it is becoming more difficult and expensive to recycle old furniture. A focus on the environment and sustainability is shifting opinion but very slowly and only in certain sectors of society. Growth in the bottled water market is, however, slowing and tap water is coming back into fashion, so anything is possible. Reverse is unlikely, refocus is possible.

### What are the positives and negatives of brands, such as Jif/Cif, Marathon/Snickers, being consolidated to present a global one?

In marketing terms, the world has become a small place and a consequence of the

globalisation of brands is standardisation. Manufacturers are constantly seeking to streamline and make production more efficient, but at the same time need to ensure that products and services remain relevant and satisfy customer needs. Branding is the means by which the customer discerns the benefits a brand offers, so changing brand names to suit a global audience requires careful planning. Take Aviva (formerly Norwich Union, Norwich Union Direct) the world's fifth largest insurance group. Removing the word 'Norwich' enables the brand to lose the localised connection and creates potential for wider appeal.

It's important to plan carefully and check the meaning of words which are used as brand names as there have been some notable mistakes: for example, the Vauxhall Nova – in Spain 'No va' means does not go.

### Are we preconditioned to believe the cheaper a product the worse it is?

When there are no other discernible attributes, price becomes the decisionmaker. That's why premium brands augment their products with guarantees and service packages. Think about buying a BBQ: if you buy a DIY store's own brand, it may last a couple of years (if well cared for) but if you buy a leading brand, such as Weber, you get a 25-year satisfaction guarantee.

Yet can we really identify quality? I find blind-tasting tests fascinating: *Which* magazine has found on several occasions that Sainsbury's Blanc de Noirs champagne beat the twice-the-price Moët & Chandon.

### ■ Module connection

*An introduction to retail management and marketing (B122): registration closes April 2011. For more info, call 0845 300 6090 or visit [www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/autumn)*



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# Support

How The Open University opens up learning for all

## WIDENING PARTICIPATION

# Encouraging success

The Open University Widening Participation strategy aims to encourage new and under-represented people into higher education...

● WIDENING PARTICIPATION has always been a core value for The Open University since the very beginning – reflected in the open access policy, which aims to broaden access to educational opportunity for all. Today, this commitment remains as strong as ever.

The OU continues to look for ways to extend educational opportunities and achieve social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

The commitment has been reaffirmed in recent years and is now encompassed in an institution-wide Widening Participation strategy, with the recruitment of students from low socio-economic groups living in the most disadvantaged communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the priority.

“Students from low socio-economic areas continue to be significantly under-represented in the higher education population,” says Dr Liz Marr, Director of the Centre for Widening Participation. “Despite more than 10 years of

government policy aimed at widening participation, there are still substantial numbers of people denied access to higher education for socio-economic reasons. In addition to breaking down barriers to access, we are also focusing on providing support to ensure that, regardless of background, our students can complete modules and achieve good grades.”

One of the key achievements at the OU has been the development and production of the Openings Programme. These special introductory modules were created to

**“I signed up for an Openings course... it gave me the confidence to leave my job and return to full-time education”**

encourage new and under-represented audiences into higher education by removing some of the barriers often faced by such learners.

Openings modules are ideal for people who are worried about their ability or the time they have to commit to studying and so provide an ideal starting point. No special qualifications or experience are needed.



Widening Participation helps many people make a start in higher education

There are no examinations to worry about and students receive support from a personal tutor who helps every step of the way. They are a low-cost option and there are

I wanted to do or whether I still could do it. I signed up for an openings module on *Understanding children* (Y156).” Susan says she had great tutor support and was able to test out whether she was suited to higher education while continuing in employment.

“Openings gave me the confidence to leave my job and return to full-time education. I am about to start my third year on a teacher training degree.

“Without my Openings course I do not think I would have had the confidence to make such a life-changing decision.”

**To find out more about Widening Participation, see [www8.open.ac.uk/about/wideningparticipation](http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/wideningparticipation)**

lots of free places available for new students who rely on state benefits as their main source of income or have a low annual household income.

“I had started university when I was a teenager but had to leave due to ill health,” says Susan Etheridge. “Ten years later after my first child I considered going back into education. I wasn’t sure what



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For further information contact the Programme Administrator at the address below:

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## ADVICE

# Networking



Sinead English  
– OU Careers  
Consultant,  
Ireland, on the  
importance of networking...

● IT IS ESTIMATED that in times of recession the percentage of jobs secured through the 'hidden job market' increases dramatically. This refers to roles that are not advertised publicly via websites, newspapers, agencies, etc.

The main reasons employers are increasingly turning to this method of filling vacancies are that the traditional methods are costly and with advertised roles there is often a deluge of applications, which takes time and resources to sift through.

Applying for advertised positions can quickly become disheartening. A targeted approach to job search using contacts you have made throughout your career, however, could significantly improve your chances of success. A commonly held view is that networking is an embarrassing exercise in self-promotion, usually involving a handful of business cards and a social occasion as the opportunity to 'work the room' and mingle with potential 'targets'. This is not true at all and is the reason why so many

## "A commonly held view is that networking is an embarrassing exercise in self-promotion"

people think they are no good at it. Networking is about making connections between people you know and the people who they know – but it is not about asking someone for a job. Networking is also a two-way street – you will form part of someone's network, as much as they will form part of yours. It is about gathering



Networking is a great way to identify new career opportunities

good and useful information about potential employers and industries by asking targeted questions to someone already working in that industry.

### Building your network

First, write a list of all your potential network contacts, including current and former colleagues; fellow students; previous tutors and lecturers; fellow participants on modules or workshops you have attended; friends and relations; neighbours; members of any clubs or professional organisations that you belong to, etc. Next, look at the

– you will always learn something useful.

You can also join online business networking groups such as LinkedIn, which can give you access to lots of useful contacts. It is also worth noting that some employers use LinkedIn to search for potential employees. Don't forget the OU Alumni Association, which could be a really good source of helpful and supportive contacts.

Once you have increased your network, you may decide to approach a company that you are interested in working for. Finding a link into the company through your network will significantly increase your chances of a speculative approach being considered.

A generic and speculative letter has a 1 in 50 chance of a positive response. A direct cold call approach (very difficult to do well) has a 1 in 30 chance of getting past the first stage. An approach email directed at someone known to you who is already working at the company has approximately a 1 in 7 chance of getting past the first stage.

[www.open.ac.uk/careers](http://www.open.ac.uk/careers)



### Top tips for networking success

Look out for opportunities to network on a regular basis

Have some business cards with your key contact information on them. It creates a more professional image than scribbling your name on a piece of paper

Remember that it is a two-way process, so be willing to provide help and support to others in your network as well as asking them for help

Try to build a rapport with the person you are speaking to

Keep an open mind when meeting people for the first time. You never know who you are talking to or who they could introduce you to

If you meet someone at an event who you would like in your network, it's worth sending them a short email afterwards, just to keep in touch

Make sure you follow up on any actions agreed quickly and appropriately

Keep a proper record of any contacts you make

Not everyone will call you back or reply to your emails. Don't take it personally, just keep going. Networking requires perseverance