

Zoology alumni

Dear Alumni,

Welcome to the Spring 2017 Newsletter.

Save the date in your diaries for Saturday, 23 September 2017 as we will be putting on a series of events in the Department especially for our alumni. It will essentially be a shortened version of last year's 150th Anniversary programme which will be embedded within the University's Alumni Festival. If you would like to see a selection of pictures from last year we have an [album for you to view](#).

We are using some of the ideas that we had last year, but also providing more opportunities for alumni to get together and talk to each other.



Our plans are:

1. Tours in the morning and over lunch of open laboratories, rare books, behind the scenes at the Museum, and the art trail.
2. A headline event by Mike Gunton, with film clips about Planet Earth II and future BBC natural history productions, at around 2pm.
3. A zoology spots/quiz in the Elementary Laboratory, followed by an explication of the specimens by some of the Museum Curators. Lavish prizes will be on offer of course.
4. Tea in the Beagle Café, where you can mingle and meet members of the Department, including the new Head of Department, Dr Howard Baylis.

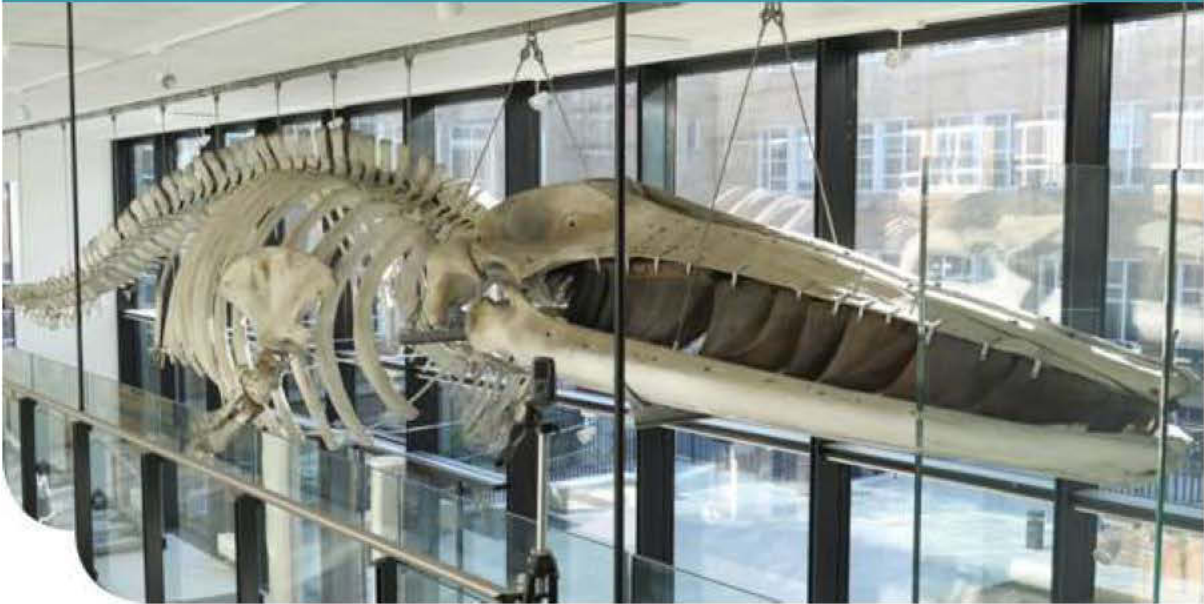
If you have any suggestions of things you would like us to include, [please get in touch](#).

We are particularly keen to encourage the formation of year groups who could have special activities and tours

laid on for them at the Festival. We also would love to welcome you back to the Department at any other time of year.

Watch out for a definitive programme in the Summer Newsletter.

Museum of Zoology reopening



The Museum's refurbishment is moving at a fast pace with new display cases being built in the gallery in readiness for the return of the specimens. The largest specimen of all, which has been in store for three years, has been conserved and suspended from the new whale hall ceiling: we hope you agree that it looks absolutely stunning. You can see the whale now from outside its hall on the New Museum Site.

As part of the e-Luminate Festival back in February an animation of the whale was projected onto the Cockcroft Building at night - **see it in all its glory**. The whale has also been keeping everyone up to date with the Museum redevelopment with his very own **Twitter account**. If you would like to continue to support the Museum you may be interested in **sponsoring a whale bone**.

The Museum conservators are working flat out to clean and prepare the specimens for their new positions in the gallery. With over 5,000 specimens, this is a Herculean task. Each display case has been individually designed for its content of specimens, labels and photos. The lighting in the gallery has been completely overhauled to provide UV-free light that will minimise damage to the specimens.

We are hugely looking forward to welcoming our visitors back to the gallery later this summer and to discover your verdict on the new displays. April is the last month to enter our prize draw for a pair of tickets to our VIP reopening event with Sir David Attenborough. To be in with a chance and to enter please donate £35 or more below.

For latest updates don't forget to follow the Department on **Facebook** or **Twitter**.

Featured research

Scotching the myth of a 15 million-year gap in the fossil record

Fossils of what may be the earliest four-legged backboned animals to walk on land have been discovered in Scotland. The lizard-like creatures lived about 355 million years ago, when the ancestors of modern reptiles, birds and mammals exited the swamps. As research leader Professor Jenny Clack says: "We're lifting the lid on a key part of the evolutionary story of life on land."



[Read more](#)

Amano: English is not the only language

A recent analysis of publications on Google Scholar relating to biodiversity conservation in 2014, revealed that 36% of the 75,000 documents were not written in English. And only half of these non-English documents included titles or abstracts in English: they would therefore be invisible to searches using English keywords. As lead author Tatsuya Amano says: "Language barriers continue to impede the global compilation and application of scientific knowledge..... I believe that the scientific community needs to start seriously tackling this issue."



[Read more](#)

Ancient DNA study shows genetic continuity between Stone Age and modern populations in East Asia

The genetic make-up of certain modern East Asian populations closely resembles that of their hunter-gatherer ancestors, as shown by the analysis of DNA extracted from the skulls of two

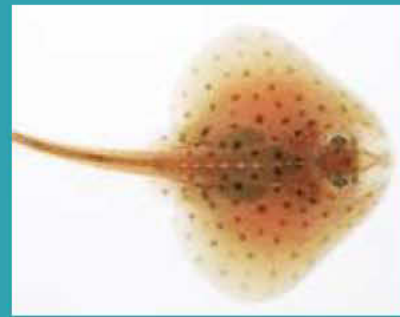


cave in an area close to the far eastern coast of Russia. This is in marked contrast to most of Western Europe, where waves of migration of early farmers from the Levant and horsemen from the Russian Steppes overwhelmed hunter-gatherer populations. As senior author Andrea Manica points out: "Genetically speaking, the populations across northern East Asia have changed very little for around eight millennia".

[Read more](#)

The evolution of gills: the key innovation for an active lifestyle that unites all vertebrates

Recent research by Andrew Gillis has shown that the gills of a jawed vertebrate, the little skate, develop from the same tissue as do the gills of jawless vertebrates (lampreys, hagfish etc). These gills had therefore evolved before the divergence of these two ancient vertebrate lineages: a key innovation as our ancestors transitioned from passive filter-feeders to active self-propelled ocean swimmers.



[Read more](#)

Professor Robert Hinde CBE FRS FBA 1923 - 2016



We are sorry to report the death of Robert Hinde, who passed away peacefully on 23 December at the age of 93.

Robert was Royal Society Research Professor, based at the sub-department of animal behaviour, Madingley, from 1963 to 1989. In a long and extraordinarily distinguished career he became the intellectual giant of ethology, who not only helped it develop as a scientific discipline but also pioneered its influence on many other fields, including psychology, psychiatry, primatology, anthropology and (together with his wife Joan Stevenson-Hinde) human child development.

Many members of the Department will have been inspired by him and we shall always feel proud that he was our friend and colleague.

Professor Andrew Balmford FRS awarded a 2017 Pilkington Teaching Award



Warm congratulations to Andrew Balmford on being awarded one of the Pilkington Teaching Awards for 2017. Andrew has been a member of the Department since 1998 and has been an inspiring lecturer in both the second and third year courses in Ecology and Conservation Science. He also co-founded and helps to run the immensely successful annual Student Conference on Conservation Science. Andrew was the only one of this year's 13 winners to have an FRS or equivalent distinction: indeed two other previous winners of this prize from Zoology, Nick Davies and Charlie Ellington, were FRSs at the time of winning their prize. How encouraging that excellence in teaching and in research can be mutually sustaining – at least, in the Department.

[Read more](#)

Marta Zlatic is awarded the 2017 Eric Kandel Young Neuroscientist Prize



We are delighted to congratulate Dr Marta Zlatic, who has been awarded the Eric Kandel Young Neuroscientist Prize 2017. The Prize, established in 2009, is awarded to 'a European neuroscientist under the age of 40, who has demonstrated outstanding independent scientific creativity and productivity.'

Marta was appointed to a lectureship in the Department in 2015 but is currently working at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute on the Janelia Research Campus in the USA.

[Read More](#)

The sound of the ocean



The Museum of Zoology ran a series of workshops collecting voices from Cambridge and beyond to create a soundtrack for our iconic Fin Whale skeleton in the newly built Whale Hall. We reached out to over 1000 people in schools, museums and other spaces. Chris Watson, award-winning wildlife sound recorder and sound artist, has combined these voices with his recordings of the world's oceans into a magical, atmospheric journey around the world. Here is the finished piece, which you can hear in the Whale Hall from late 2017.

[Listen](#)

The Bidders: a Cambridge zoological family



George Bidder (1863 - 1954) was a distinguished marine biologist and lectured in Part II Zoology on sponges (1920 - 27). He was an important benefactor both to the Marine Biological Station in Plymouth and the Zoological Station in Naples. His daughter Anna Bidder (1903 - 2001) will be known to some older alumni. She was an expert on cephalopods, the founder president of Lucy Cavendish College, and a distinctive element of Tea Talk audiences in her later years. Find out more about the Bidders in the article below, written by Adrian Friday.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight on...

Sir Jim Smith - knighted in 2017 New Year Honours

Dr James Cuthbert Smith FRS, better known to his colleagues as Jim Smith, has been knighted in the 2017 New Year's Honours, for services to Medical Research and Science Education. Jim was a member of the Department of Zoology from 2001-2009 while based at the Gurdon Institute, before moving to the NIMR.



[Read more](#)

Pink whips and gears

Hannah Rowland (right) appeared on the BBC's The One Show on 7 January discussing what the Puss moth caterpillar does to escape being eaten. This involves eyespots, a smiley mouth, acid and pink whips.

Malcolm Burrows' and Greg Sutton's research on gears in the jumping mechanism of the plant-hopper Issus featured in the 2017 New Year QI programme on BBC2.



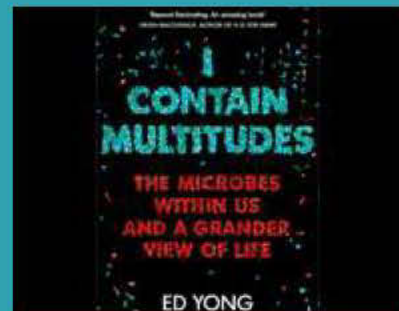
Books

I Contain Multitudes

Ed Yong (Part II 2001-2), an award-winning science writer, invites us to look afresh at living organisms, and think of them as bustling ecosystems and not just as individuals. "All zoology is really ecology", he writes.

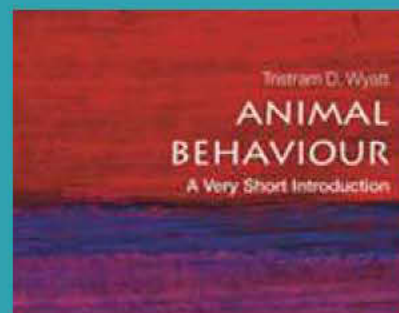
In one reviewer's opinion: "With a simply wonderful book, Ed Yong opens the doorway to a hidden world around and inside us. He's smart, he's witty and he's at the cutting edge."

[Read more](#)



Animal Behaviour: A Very Short Introduction

Tristram Wyatt (Part II 1975-8, PhD 1978-1983) has just produced a book on animal behaviour in the highly prestigious OUP series of Very Short introductions. This state-of-the-art guide pulls off the difficult trick of being concise yet rigorous, and clear yet interesting. Among many studies, it features work by contemporary Cambridge zoologists on meerkats, cuckoos, and honeyeaters.



[Read more](#)

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Dear
World...

Yours,
Cambridge



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