

## Zoology alumni

Your alumni number is ##Constituent ID##



### Dear alumni

Welcome to the very first e-newsletter for Zoology alumni. I hope you will enjoy the articles below covering research, news of department members, alumni events, and ways for you to be involved. Our alumni relations team consists of Rachel French, the Alumni Coordinator, and myself.

The major event we are planning is a celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Department or – more specifically – of Alfred Newton becoming the first Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy in 1866. This event will take place during the University's Alumni Festival in 2016: Friday 23 September to Sunday 25 September. Look out for more information about the 150th Anniversary in future newsletters.

For Alumni Festival this year, 25 to 27 September 2015, we are also putting on special events for Zoology alumni, including a lecture by Professor Nick Davies on cuckoos. Please see below for further details of these events. We warmly invite you to attend both of these weekends and encourage you to put the dates in your diaries.

We would be delighted to answer any of your questions and to hear your views; please email **Rachel**. We particularly look forward to welcoming many of you back to the Department over the coming years. If you know other Zoology alumni who might be interested in this newsletter, please do pass it on. If the message has been forwarded to you and you would like to be added to the mailing list, please **contact us**.

We are also seeking support for various aspects of the Department. Please have a look at our current **activities** if you would like to make a contribution.

William Foster  
Deputy Head of Department, Teaching Staff: 1976 – present



## Sir David Attenborough visits the Museum of Zoology

During a visit on 21 April 2015, Sir David toured the renovated Arup Building, which will be named The David Attenborough Building. He also spent time looking at some of the iconic specimens that will be housed in the Museum's new state-of-the-art stores.

The transformation of the Museum has been greatly helped by a £2m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

[Read more](#)



### Homer and the blue potato

By assessing Homer's response to a novel object, like a blue potato, researchers can begin to measure his personality and predict how he might find food, how he learns and how he might associate with other baboons. Does he sample the environment directly by himself or indirectly by keeping a close eye on how other wild baboons behave in Namibia's Tsaobis Nature Park?

[Read more](#)



### Seeing the skull beneath the skin

The first 3-D reconstruction of the skull of a 360 million-year old collateral ancestor of land vertebrates, the iconic *Acanthostega*, suggests that these creatures, which lived in shallow water environments, were unexpectedly crocodile-like.

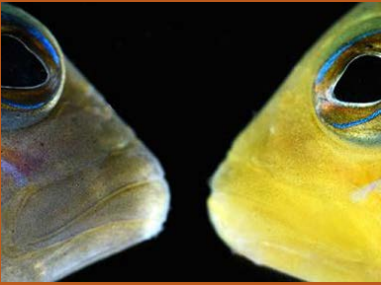
[Read more](#)



## Staying ahead of the game

An international team of researchers, led by Derek Smith and his group, have shown that it may be possible to improve the effectiveness of the seasonal flu vaccine by pre-emptively vaccinating against likely future strains rather than by using a strain already circulating in the human population.

[Read more](#)



## Colourful reef fish is a wolf in sheep's clothing

The dottyback, a small predatory reef fish, can change its colour to imitate a variety of other reef fishes, allowing it to sneak into their communities undetected and eat their young.

[Read more](#)



## World's protected areas receive eight billion visits a year

A first study of global visitation rates to protected areas reveals that nature-based tourism has an annual economic value of billions of dollars. Arguing for much greater investment to protect these areas, Andrew Balmford points out that "stopping the unfolding extinction crisis is not unaffordable. Three months of Apple profits could go a long way to securing the future of nature. Humanity doesn't need electronic communication to survive. But we do need the rest of the planet."

[Read more](#)

## New centre for biodiversity conservation named after Sir David Attenborough

An iconic building in the centre of Cambridge is being named the David Attenborough Building, in honour of Sir David's pioneering work in bringing the wonders of our natural

world to our screens.

The David Attenborough Building will be home to the redesigned Museum of Zoology and to the academics and NGOs who make up the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI). The building will embody the themes of biodiversity, conservation and public engagement: Sir David has dedicated his life to these themes. He was an undergraduate student in Zoology (Clare 1945) and is a patron of several of the CCI organizations.

[Read more](#)



## Croonian lecture awarded to Nick Davies

Warm congratulations to [Professor Nick Davies](#) on being awarded the [Royal Society Croonian Prize Lecture](#) for 2015, for his work on the co-evolved responses of brood parasitic cuckoos and their hosts, the process of co-evolution and adaptation and the extraordinary biology of these unusual birds.

This prize lecture is the premier lecture in the biological sciences and is delivered annually at the Royal Society in London, accompanied by a medal and a gift of £1,000.

[Read more](#)



## The Janet Moore Prize for supervising in Zoology

In memory of [Janet Moore \(1926 – 2014\)](#), and with donations generously given for the purpose by her friends, colleagues and relatives, we have established an annual prize recognizing an outstanding contribution to undergraduate supervision by someone who is not a University Teaching Officer (UTO).



Janet herself made an enormous contribution to supervising in the Department; this prize acknowledges how much we rely on the skills and enthusiasm of non-UTOs, like Janet, who do this work.

The first prizes have been given this year to Emma Garnett and Rick Thompson for their supervising in Part II Zoology.

[Read more](#)

## Alfred Newton: first and longest serving Professor of Zoology (1866–1907)

Alfred Newton, whose portrait has gazed down benignly on generations of Zoology students in the Balfour Library, was the first Professor of Zoology, and in September 2016 we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of his appointment to the post.

He was a distinguished ornithologist and one of the first zoologists to accept and champion the views of Charles Darwin. Darwin did not repay the compliment and declined to support his appointment to the Chair of Zoology.

[Read more](#)



**Dame**



**Frances Ashcroft**

In June 2015, Professor Fran Ashcroft was made a DBE for her services to medical science and the public understanding of science.

Fran (Girton 1980) is an alumna of the Department, where she also carried out her PhD under the supervision of John Treherne. She was awarded the Croonian lecture of the Royal Society in 2014.

**Julian Jacobs wins Employee Recognition Award**

Our Departmental Administrator, Julian



Jacobs (pictured above, right), seen here with Professor Michael Akam, was awarded an Employee Recognition award at a ceremony in the Old Schools last December.

This was partly in recognition of his drive and energy in the Department's successful bid for an Athena SWAN Bronze award and more generally for his leadership within the Department in helping to create an environment in which showing respect for others and valuing diversity are positively promoted.



**Alumni Festival: 25 – 27 September 2015**

Several events are taking place of particular interest to Zoology alumni and online booking is now open:

**Tours of the Zoology Museum Stores**

Friday 25 September, 12pm to 12.45pm, 1pm to 1.45pm and 2pm to

Image by Robert Taylor

2.45pm (meet at the Department's Reception)

**Zoology Open Labs**  
Friday 25 September,  
12pm to 3pm (meet at Reception)  
No need to book

**Professor Nick Davies Presentation**  
Saturday 26 September,  
4.15pm to 5.15pm  
(Sidgwick Site)

**Zoology Alumni Drinks Reception**  
Saturday 26 September,  
5.30pm to 7.30pm  
(meet at Reception)

[Book online](#)

[Read more](#)

### Book Review: *Spirals in Time*



Meet the oyster women of the Gambia who fetch oysters from the mangrove swamps and wrestle with each other at an annual festival, in Helen Scales's (Newnham 1996) new book. It is to be the Book of the Week on BBC Radio 4 in August 2015 and will be read by Helen herself.

[Read more](#)

### Book Review: *Cuckoo: Cheating by Nature*



Reading this new book by Nick Davies, written in his clear beguiling style, is like being taken on a nature ramble by a "particularly well-informed uncle" (Kathryn Hughes, *Mail on Sunday*) and is a "glorious reminder of the sheer wonder of our planet and all its strange life forms" (Mark Cocker, *The Spectator*).

[Read more](#)



### Meet Rachel French, the new Zoology Alumni Coordinator

If you have any questions regarding events or visits, please contact Rachel by email at [rf394@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rf394@cam.ac.uk) or by phone on +44 (0)1223 336650.



Department of Zoology  
University of Cambridge  
Downing Street  
Cambridge CB2 3EJ

**Tel** +44 (0)1223 336600

**Email** [Rachel French, Alumni Coordinator](mailto:Rachel.French@zoo.cam.ac.uk)

We sent this email to [##Preferred\\_Email##](#) because you are subscribed to receive departmental alumni mailings from the University of Cambridge. [Update your mailing preferences.](#)

**How we use your data**

[Privacy policy](#)  
[Data protection statement](#)

**Website**

[www.zoo.cam.ac.uk](http://www.zoo.cam.ac.uk)