



African Studies Centre

2010 Newsletter



Director's Report

Dr David Pratten

The 2009-10 academic year was as busy and as exciting a year as I think we have yet had at the African Studies Centre. Not only was our teaching, research and events' schedule as full as ever, but we also moved the centre to a new building during the Easter vacation. We are now in fully-refurbished offices at 13 Bevington Road which is conveniently located next door to the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies and close to relevant colleges and departments. We are including details of our new building below.

In October the centre welcomed its fifth cohort of students to the MSc. Committed and industrious, 28 new students threw themselves into the programme taking over a film series, sitting new option papers on African literature, film and violence, and devising research dissertations on topics as diverse as male fashion contests in South Africa and political party factionalism in Zambia. The programme continues to be extremely popular and we have processed as many applicants as we have ever had for next year's course.

Our events' schedule was jam-packed all year with many highlights, particularly from South Africa. Justice Albie Sachs of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, for instance, gave an inspiring talk at the Bram Fischer Memorial lecture held at New College in October. In June Jonny Steinberg, the award winning author on policing and politics in post-apartheid South Africa, gave the African Studies Annual lecture to an overflowing lecture theatre in the wake of South Africa's opening World Cup football match.

We have also sponsored a range of African Studies events across the university during the year. These included hosting a film screening for the Black History Month, sponsoring a conference on the History of Punishment in Southern Africa convened by Professor Jocelyn Alexander, and supporting two workshops which celebrated the life and work of well-known Oxford Africanists, David Parkin and Gavin Williams. In May over 70 doctoral students from the UK, Europe and North America attended this year's



Wanja Knighton, Sabrina Souza, David Pratten at the Teaching Support Awards

Researching Africa Day which provides graduate students with the opportunity to present their original research. We also supported the British Zimbabwe Research Days and welcomed numerous visitors to the centre including Professor Peter Alexander and Dr Jacqui Goldin who were Oppenheimer Fellows, and Professor Ali Mazrui.

Not only were the centre's faculty heavily engaged in these events and their own teaching and research, but they have also been very involved in supporting the broader African Studies community through professional bodies and international journals. William Beinart, for example, is President of our professional body, the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom (ASAUK), and has been very busy promoting its activities and organizing the biennial conference held at St Antony's College in September 2010. Throughout his sabbatical year Dave Anderson has also been acting Director of the British Institute of East Africa spending a lot of time in Nairobi. Dave also edits the Journal of East African Studies which is going from strength to strength. I have recently become co-editor of AFRICA, the journal of the International African Institute, and like Dave I have been involved in 'Writing Workshops' which are sponsored by the ASAUK to help enable African scholars to publish in the top-ranked international journals. Nic Cheeseman has also become the book reviews editor of the Journal of Modern African Studies and H el ene Neveu Kringelbach is editorial assistant to the journal Social Anthropology.

Of the teaching staff we were sad to say goodbye to Dr Matteo Rizzo, who had been with us as a departmental lecturer since October 2008. He is taking up the prestigious



Left to Right, Dr Nic Cheeseman, Prof Ali Mazrui, Prof Terence Ranger and Dr David Pratten. Photo taken during Prof Mazrui's visit to Oxford

Smuts Fellowship at the University of Cambridge and we wish him well for the future. Under Wanja Knighton's able stewardship the administration of the centre is as

smooth-running as it is warmly-welcoming. In November Wanja and Sabrina (see photograph left), our administrative assistant, received richly deserved teaching support awards from the Vice-Chancellor. Sabrina left on maternity leave at the beginning of Hilary Term and gave birth in Brazil to a baby girl Marina in February. Sarah Forrest, a Yale graduate, joined us just as preparations for our move to the new building were reaching full-speed and has been an invaluable asset to the team.

"On a personal note, while it has been a hectic year, I must end by thanking my colleagues for making my first year as Director of the centre such a rewarding one."

13 Bevington Road

On 22 March 2010 the African Studies Centre officially took possession of 13 Bevington Road, its new permanent home. This was the culmination of over a year's planning and a six-month building programme.

The building, a five-story Victorian detached corner property, had been unoccupied since the University Clubs moved out many years previously. With generous support from the University and the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies all of the facilities in the building have been refurbished. Along with layout improvements and the provision of disabled access, the entire building was re-decorated, re-wired and re-plumbed. Despite the heavy snow in January the project was delivered under budget and on schedule. We are very grateful to all of the people who worked on the project. They are too numerous to mention, of course, but Cliff Duncan the project manager, John Robinson our architect from Frankham Consultancy Group Ltd, Susannah Bartholomew and Shannon Stephen at SIAS, our contractors Longcross Construction Ltd, and Darren Osborne, the site manager, deserve our particular thanks.



We are now fortunate to be in possession of a bright and modern suite of nine teaching and administration rooms along with a large seminar room and library. The Anthony Kirk-Greene Room provides an ideal space for small-group teaching and can be converted to provide seating for around 40 people in lecture mode. When not in use for teaching the room also doubles as a common-room. The Terence Ranger Reading Room houses our teaching collection of over 8,000 volumes along with student workspaces.

Our new location is far more central and convenient as it neighbours St Antony's College where we hold our lectures and the Thursday seminar



Annual Record 2009–10

The MSc programme in African Studies welcomed its fifth cohort in October 2009. The 28 students participated energetically in the many activities organized throughout the year.

Visitors 2009–10

A number of scholars visited the Centre during the 2009–10 academic year:

Dr Wafula Okumu (Institute for Strategic Studies, Pretoria) joined us in Trinity Term 2010 to participate in a workshop featuring his current research on border conflicts in eastern Africa.

Professor Peter Alexander (University of Johannesburg) joined us for Trinity Term 2010. With support from the Oppenheimer Fund he worked towards the completion of two projects: a history of Witbank's coal miners and 'Classifying Soweto'.

Dr Jaqui Goldin (Associate Professor, University of the Western Cape, Integrated Water Resources Management Programme) joined us for Trinity Term 2010. In her capacity as Waternet Chair for Water and Society, she is working on ways to integrate the Capability Approach into discourse on water. She visited the African Studies Centre as an Oppenheimer Fellow.



Jonny Steinberg giving the annual lecture at St Antony's College.

Researching Africa Day Workshop, St Antony's College, Oxford, May 15, 2010

The eleventh annual Researching Africa Day workshop was co-convened by Michelle Osborn (MSc 2005–06) and Elizabeth Cooper, both of whom are completing their doctorates in Social Anthropology. This year's workshop, exploring the theme of 'Predictability and Unpredictability in Africa', attracted over 70 participants from universities across the UK, Europe, and North America and from a range of disciplines including anthropology, political science, economics, history, development studies, religious studies, literature and geography.

Following an opening address by Dr David Pratten, which highlighted the potential of studying uncertainties and contingencies, fourteen papers were presented by graduate students over the day's schedule of four panels. Drawing from research done across different parts of Africa, presenters examined the role of uncertainty in the lives of refugees and rebels; questioned the impacts of development projects and international aid; discussed the politics of representation and narrative in oral histories, media representation, and popular fiction; and investigated predictability and unpredictability in governance and corruption, voting patterns, religious initiatives, and medical research. Each panel of papers stimulated broad-ranging discussions between the audience and presenters of the implications for societies within and beyond Africa.

The day closed with an address by Professor William Beinart that reflected on how this selection of contemporary research relates to previous decades of scholarship in and about Africa. Professor Beinart challenged workshop participants to continue to study the complexities readily apparent among African societies and to critically reflect upon the relationships between politics, history, ideology and culture at play in each research question and approach.

Funding from the African Studies Association UK and the University of Oxford's African Studies Centre made this workshop possible.



An Africanist's Legacy – A workshop in Celebration of the Work of David Parkin

Hélène Neveu Kringelbach

On the 8th and 9th of July, a workshop in celebration of David Parkin's work was held at the Pauling Centre for Human Sciences in Oxford. The workshop was organised jointly by the African Studies Centre, the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA), All Souls College and SOAS. Following his retirement from the Oxford Chair of Social Anthropology in 2008, some 45 of David Parkin's former students and colleagues gathered to pay tribute to his work.

Having joined the University of London as an undergraduate to study Anthropology and Bantu and Swahili Linguistics, David Parkin began working in East Africa in the early 1960s. His enduring love for the region brought him first to Uganda in 1962, where he spent two years as a Research Associate of the East African Institute of Social Research. His fieldwork in Kampala led to his SOAS PhD in 1965, the year of his appointment to a SOAS lectureship, and later to the 1969 monograph *Neighbours and Nationals in an African City Ward*. Not one to linger in London, he embarked on a study of Giriama society in 1966, for which he chose to contrast his earlier urban study with a rural location. Several periods of fieldwork there produced two monographs, *Palms, Wine and Witnesses: Public Spirit and Private Gain in an African Farming Community* in 1972, and *The Sacred Void: Spatial Images of Work and Ritual among the Giriama of Kenya* in 1991. In this post-colonial context of rapid urbanization, however, Parkin remained drawn to issues of social change in cities, and this led him to carry out new fieldwork with Luo migrants in Nairobi. Towards the end of the 1970s he chose to explore the region further and to work among coastal Muslim communities in Tanzania. This move later brought him to work on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, and to an ever deepening engagement with the trans-national Indian Ocean world from the 1990s onwards.

Whilst Parkin came to Anthropology via an interest in language and comparative semantics and mastered three East African languages within the early years of his career, his concerns gradually grew to encapsulate every aspect of social life, from class formation, politics, economics and legal systems to therapeutic practices, transnational religious networks, forms of Muslim prayer, ways of 'learning' religion, performance, displacement, the material culture of loss, and cognition. Parkin's exploration of these themes has always been grounded in thorough ethnographic knowledge of East Africa, and this rare combination of a broad geographic and linguistic range, an enduring engagement in a wider region and an intuitive sense of social change undoubtedly accounts for his immense contribution to British Anthropology.

Publications by African Studies Centre Staff

David Anderson

Anderson, David M. & Neil C.M. Carrier (2010). *Khat in the UK: social harms and legislation* (Home Office Research Report: London, June 2010), Anderson, David M. (2010). 'Sexual threat and settler society: black perils in Kenya, c.1907-1930', *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 38 i (2010): 47-74, Anderson, David M. (2010). 'The new piracy: the local context', *Survival* 52 i (2010): 44-50, Anderson, David M. (2010). 'Majimboism: the troubled history of an idea', in Daniel Branch & Nic Cheeseman (eds), *Our Turn to Eat! Politics in Kenya since 1950* (Lit Verlag: Berlin, 2010), Anderson, David M. 'The Kenyan cattle trade and the economics of empire, 1914-1948', in Karen Brown & Daniel Gilfoyle (eds), *Healing the Herds: Disease, Livestock Economies, and the Globalization of Veterinary Medicine* (Ohio UP: Athens OH, 2010): 250-68, Anderson, David M. (2009). 'Somali piracy: historical context, political contingency', *Working Paper 34, Centre for European Policy Studies* (December 2009), Anderson, David M. & Neil C.M. Carrier (2009). 'Khat in colonial Kenya: a history of prohibition and control', *Journal of African History* 50 iii (2009): 377-98

William Beinart

With Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007), xii + 396, paperback edition in 2008, With Katie McKeown, 'Wildlife Media and Representations of Africa, 1950s-1970s', *Environmental History*, 14, 3 (2009), 429-53, 'Ecological Imperialism, Plant Transfers, and African Environmental History', *Nova Acta Leopoldina*, 98, 360 (2009), 133-142, Edited With Marcelle Dawson (eds.), *Popular Politics and Resistance Movements in South Africa* (Witwatersrand University Press, 2010). Forthcoming: With Luvuyo Wotshela, *Prickly Pear: the Social History of a Plant in the Eastern Cape, South Africa* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 2011)

Nic Cheeseman

'Power Sharing in Comparative Perspective: The Origins and Consequences of Unity Government in Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48: 203-229 (2010) [with Miles Tendi], 'Parties, Platforms, and Political Mobilization: The Zambian Presidential Election of 2008', *African Affairs* 109 (434) 51-76 (2010) [with Marja Hinfelaar], 'Kenya in 2009', in Mehler, Melber, and Walraven ed., *Africa Yearbook: Politics, Economy and Society South of the Sahara in 2008*, (Leiden, Brill, 2009).

David Pratten

Pratten, D. (in press). 'Bodies of power: narratives of selfhood and security in Nigeria'. In *African Vigilantes*, edited by T. Gratz and T. Kirsch. Oxford: James Currey Publishers.





Reading Weber for Breakfast

The 'Celebrating Gavin' conference to mark the retirement of Gavin Williams was held on Friday 9th July (at the Department of Politics and International Relations) and on Saturday 10th July (at Queen Elizabeth House). The event was a roaring success, bringing together a broad range of students and colleagues across the continents, disciplines and generations to celebrate the scholarship, teaching, service to the collegiate university, solidarity and friendship of Gavin Williams. Thanks to the support of the Department of Politics and International Relations, the Oxford Research Network on Government in Africa, The Instituto Camoes Centre, the African Studies Centre, the Department of International Development (QEH) and St Peter's College, a number of former students from abroad were able to participate in the conference, which added greatly to the event. All told, over 30 speakers and 50 participants came from a large number of countries including Denmark, India, Ireland, Nigeria, and South Africa.

The conference took in many of the core themes of Gavin's career including the political economy of Nigeria, South African history, how to understand agrarian societies, academia as a vocation, and Weber, Marx and political sociology more generally. The conference began with an appreciation by Lionel Cliffe, who paid respect to Gavin's willingness to devote his time and energies to the task of institution building and spoke warmly of their work together setting up the influential Review of African Political Economy. Cliffe also re-posed for the 21st century the questions of the role of concerned intellectuals, their choice of research and

their methods. Thereafter many of the papers (too numerous to be detailed here) both highlighted the personal influence of Gavin Williams on the careers and lives of his students and colleagues, and illuminated issues of major importance to the study of Africa, sociology, and the political economy of development.

Jeremy Seekings and Kate Meagher explained how Gavin's exhortations to read Weber for breakfast (!) had led them to reconsider the study of class in South Africa, and the significance of social networks for capitalist development, respectively. Later, Adekeye Adebajo talked about the life and legacy of Ruth First – a close friend and colleague of Gavin's – in a paper that was both insightful and touching. Ann Pitcher, Lindsay Whitfield, Barbara Harriss-White and Raufu Mustapha all sought to test different arguments of Gavin's against new contexts and new empirical information, finding that his insights had much to contribute to an explanation of the puzzles they confronted in their own research. Suitably, the conference ended with music and dancing, with Gavin and his family leading the celebrations as they have done so often over the years.

At an excellent dinner at St Peter's College, Barbara Harriss-White summarised Gavin's great importance as a scholar-activist, teacher, researcher, friend and person. The standing ovation in appreciation of Gavin that followed will live long in the memory and demonstrated the extent to which the sentiments so eloquently voiced by Barbara were shared by all those present.



The Politics of Presidentialism (2010-13)

Nic Cheeseman

Nic Cheeseman is engaged in a major research project on presidential-legislative relations with Paul Chaisty (Russian and East European Studies) and Timothy Power (Latin American Centre). Despite the obvious importance of presidents, we still know remarkably little about how executives try and build support and maintain parliamentary coalitions in newly democratic contexts. In particular, the researchers engaged in this project are keen to explain the surprising sustainability of multiparty presidentialism in Africa, Latin America, and postcommunist Europe. Despite predictions to the contrary, presidents have been remarkably successful at winning legislative support, even when they have faced largely hostile parliaments. Of course, where presidents must broker compromises with a number of political parties, the survival of the government hinges on coalitional politics. The project thus aims to identify the different strategies that presidents use to build multiparty coalitions. The research will begin by exploring the institutional and personal tools that presidents may utilise as they struggle to glue their unstable alliances together, including agenda control, budgetary clientelism ("pork"), appointment power (for example to the cabinet), and selective use of presidential prerogatives, among other instruments.

Through a comparative analysis of Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Kenya, Malawi, Russia and Ukraine we hope to answer a number of important questions. Do presidents in different regions tend to use different tools to build support? Are all of the tools equally effective, or are presidents better advised to use some than others? Can greater use of one tool (such as clientelism) enable a president to avoid using another (such as inclusion within the cabinet)? The team is also interested in whether the mechanisms utilised by presidents to manage coalitions impact on the capacity of parliaments to hold executives to account for their actions. In other words, is there a trade-off between policy decisiveness and horizontal accountability? Are governments that are more efficient also more prone to corruption? The answers to these questions are central not only to the day to day performance of governments in young democracies, but also to the fate of the democratization process itself.

The study, which will be one of the first attempts to compare presidential performance across Africa, Latin America and post-communist Europe, will use a wide range of sources including interviews and parliamentary records. It is hoped that the research will result in a number of publications including case studies, comparative articles, and a co-authored monograph.

Match Report

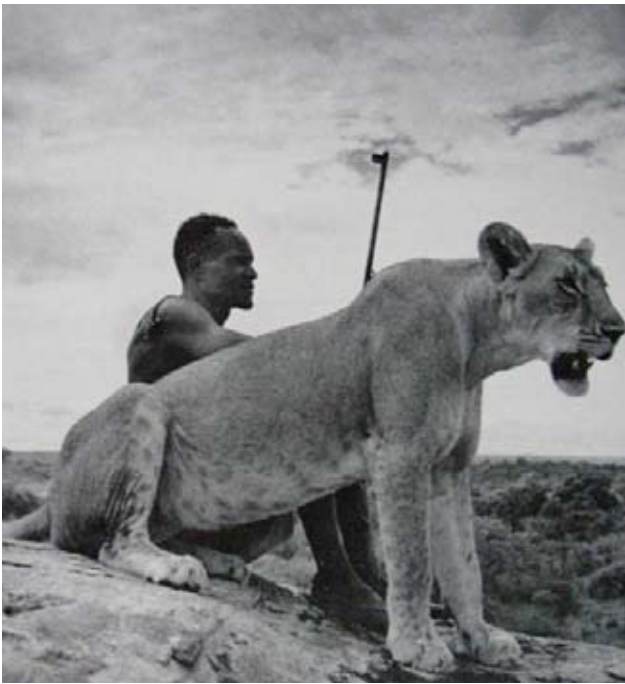
You may be forgiven for thinking that this season's international football highlight was the World Cup in South Africa. True disciples of the 'beautiful game' know, however, that the most compelling encounter taking place on Friday 25 June was not the Brazil-Portugal clash in Durban, but rather the annual Oxford African Studies 'staff-versus-students' match at the Iffley Fields. This year Chris Hopkins led a students' team against a "staff" side captained in absentia by Matteo Rizzo. In fact, most

of the staff were in absentia, and relied on husbands and their supervisees to occupy the space in front of the impeccably dressed goal keeper, Professor William Beinart, who was the only African Studies faculty member who made it onto the field. Estimates of the final score are as uncertain as the estimates of the number of players on the pitch at any one time. We can confirm though that the goal action was far superior to anything witnessed in Durban with the "staff" emerging victorious with a 6-5 win.



Wildlife film and representations of Africa

William Beinart



Makedde Lobotio and Elsa

My new research project, funded by a British Academy grant (2009–12), explores popular literature, photography, and film about African wildlife from about 1945 to 1980. These representations of Africa have long been widespread in Western countries and beyond. Illustrated books poured off the presses in the 1950s and 1960s. Hollywood discovered Africa after the Second World War, and many stars made feature films in East Africa. Some of them, like *King Solomon's Mines* and *Mogambo* were box office hits. For more than half a century, natural history documentary film has commanded important slots on British TV, with audiences of millions. Arguably it is not least by these routes that the majority of Western people encountered Africa and through which popular views of Africa were formed. Wildlife media has also influenced some important processes in Africa, such as the reservation of land for wildlife – a phenomenon of the post-colonial as much as the colonial period – as well as the growth of tourism, and the development of environmental NGOs.

I am focusing research around a number of key authors and film-makers, some of whom became household names. Joy Adamson, who wrote *Born Free*, published in 1960, is probably – along with her husband George – the best known. But there were many others such as Armand Denis, Gerald Durrell, David Attenborough (who started his career on a 'Zoo Quest' trip to West Africa), Bernhard Grzimek, George Schaller, Sue Hart and Jane Goodall. Film actors also became absorbed

in the enterprise. Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers, stars of the film version of *Born Free* (1966), became wildlife film producers and authors. The popular impetus was sustained by a new generation of ethologists, film-makers and activists, including Des and Jen Bartlett, Alan and Joan Root, Simon Trevor and Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton. I am not going to be able to write in detail about all of them, but am particularly interested in the intersection between the rise of conservation, new sciences such as ethology, and wildlife film. I intend to locate my subjects in their social context within Africa countries. And I have made a start in interviewing Africa people in Kenya who assisted in the enterprise. Makedde Lobotio, pictured, and one of the Adamsons' key assistants, sadly died a couple of years ago, but we have found a number of others.

My research, with the able assistance so far of Katie McKeown, Neil Carrier and Dominique Schafer, traverses a wide scope from Cheltenham to Isiolo, from the history of national parks, zoology and photography to Hollywood and British TV documentary. Equally important will be the networks within eastern and southern Africa that sustained this large and diverse enterprise. A taste of early findings can be found in my article with Katie McKeown, see below.



Joy Adamson and Elsa, 1958

African Studies Prizes 2009-2010

Kirk-Greene Prize for Best Overall Performance:
Leanne Johansson

Terence Ranger Prize for the Best Dissertation
Performance: Joe Philp

African Studies Centre award for the Best
Inter-disciplinary Performance: Lucy Plint



Alumni Articles

Sport and Development in East Africa

Malcolm Anderson (2007-08) writes about his involvement in athletics in East Africa.



On 3 May 2010, Urga Negewo raised his arm victoriously as he became the Belfast Marathon Champion. This race was the end of a much longer journey; Urga had trained and raced domestically in Ethiopia for 9 years but Belfast marked a new day in his career as he collected £2,000 pounds profit. He chose to deposit the money in a bank account so it could accrue interest. Dinkinesh Tefera, a young female athlete from rural Bekoji, Ethiopia, will travel internationally for the first time on 2 October 2010, endeavouring to become a professional runner and earn income that can create a wealth of change to her life back home. Her destination: Loch Ness, Scotland. Back in Addis Ababa, athlete Gudissa Tolosa, a nineteen year old orphan, graduated this past summer from Yenesew University College with an accounting diploma and is preparing for his IELTS exams at the British Council in Addis Ababa. All three athletes train together under Running Across Border's athletic programme.

On commencement of the MSc Programme three years ago I shifted my academic focus from the democratization process in East African countries to sport in the region. The ethos of the MSc at Oxford is to stretch and challenge students' thinking, critically articulate arguments and present them in coherent and convincing ways; I chose to

implement this by combining sport and academia. Sport is a major part of my life as I have played competitively as a Blues golfer and a St Hugh's College tennis team member, and athletics has been a core interest since I lived and trained with students at 6,500 feet in the Kenyan Rift Valley while teaching English in 2001-02. I settled on investigating the historical development of athletics in Kenya for my dissertation, a topic where little research had been previously completed. Twelve months after embarking on my Oxford experience, and in partnership with fellow Oxford student Garrett Ash (MSc Athletic Performance), I established Running Across Borders (RAB). (www.runningacrossborders.org)

RAB, a non-profit organization that expands economic opportunity to East African youth through running, utilises the power of sport to empower individuals and change lives. RAB fulfills this objective by establishing and maintaining athletics training camps in East Africa which impart the resources required for each beneficiary to achieve his or her full potential as a runner and student. Athletics and educational infrastructures are more limited in Ethiopia compared to Kenya therefore our first camp is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at 8,000 feet altitude. The facility allows us to provide athletes with a structured training programme supervised by qualified Ethiopian coaches, along with accommodation, food, sports equipment and medical expertise. RAB simultaneously nurtures athletes' academic development by providing English tuition alongside athletics training. RAB's goal is for each athlete to realise economic opportunity as either a professional middle to long distance runner, a student accepted to begin post-secondary education, or a working professional in a running-related industry such as sports medicine, sports administration or running tourism. Only a very small percentage of athletes will ever become elite runners so the emphasis on education and broader life skills is crucial.

Although RAB is generously supported by the Girls Gotta Run Foundation and other organizations and individuals, our Runners Exchange Programme is essential to sustainable funding. Athletes from the UK, USA and Continental Europe have taken part in Runners Exchange, a programme ideal for top-class foreign competitors seeking improved performance to enthusiasts wanting to experience East Africa's running culture. In 2011 we will expand to a rural town, Bekoji, where we are working with Town of Runners, a documentary film that follows the story of three young athletes over a two year period leading up to the 2012 Olympics. (www.townofrunners.co.uk) This second camp facility in Bekoji will expand the number of youth who benefit from our programmes as well as the geographic area that will profit from the resulting economic development. Like this film, moving beyond portrayals of African youth through the standard lens of poverty to viewing them as individuals with ambition and talent is a goal that RAB seeks to engender in our athletes, staff and foreign visitors.

From Oxford to Obama (via Google)



Former MSc student Topo Folarin (2005-6) speaks on life after the MSc and varied posts he has held

It was July 2006, and I'd recently completed my MSc in African Studies at Oxford. There was one prevailing question in my mind: what next?

After working as a dean for International Baccalaureate camps at St Antony's in the summer, I needed to scramble to figure out my

next steps. Having interviewed at several companies in London, Google stood out above the rest. I didn't enter Oxford University thinking that I'd end up at Google, but I was won over after learning more about the company while a graduate student, and certainly after making good use of the search engine for my African Studies thesis! By the end of August, following seven nerve-wracking interviews, I was officially employed by the company's public relations department. After a four month hassle over my visa, I begin work in London in November of 2006.

Working for Google was nothing if not exciting. The moment I walked into UK headquarters near Victoria Station, I was told to pack my bags for an immediate team meeting in Paris. A day later, I boarded a plane to Moscow for a series of meetings with Google's local business partners in Russia. After returning to London, I was assigned oversight for Google's public relations and public affairs activities in Greece, the Ukraine, Romania, Israel, and Turkey, in addition to countries without a local Google office, which included most African nations. A fascinating, fast-paced job, I spent many hours on the road, introducing Google products to various audiences, working through thorny cultural and technological problems with government officials, and speaking with the media about Google's values. I cannot imagine a better job after my MSc degree.

Due to homesickness for the States, I left Google after a year and a half to work for the Obama campaign. After the election, and continuing to the present time, I began work at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington DC on a one-year fellowship, in which I get to put my MSc degree to good use. As a part of my fellowship, I think and write about Africa, and hope to travel there soon. As always, I am excited about what the future may bring.



Coming to grips with subject pedigrees on the MSc.

By Kingwa Kamencu (2009-10)



In my undergraduate days at the University of Nairobi, my subject 'loves' were three: literature, politics and history. When choosing my main subjects, my father had warned me off politics -- "it has math!"; words enough to steer me clear of it after a lifetime of miserable grades in algebra and equations. So I continued with history and literature which I found fascinating and fulfilling. There is nothing to capture your mind like the story of Africa's stolen

history by the Egyptologists, or Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which 'writes back' a playground retort to the former imperial powers -- "So there!" But truthfully, I never really forgot about politics. Upon reading about the MSc online, the emphasis on politics as a discipline of study got my blood pumping in that direction again.

Academic subject hierarchies are tacitly acknowledged all over the world but they had extra pronouncement at the University of Nairobi. Generally in the university's School of Social Sciences and Humanities, history and literature were castaways; anthropology was someone's bedraggled cat; Arabic, German, French, Linguistics and their lesser cousins were not mentioned in polite society. But economics, philosophy and yes, politics, were valiant soldiers fighting world causes. So the idea of moving from literature to a place where I could 'take on the world' sounded like dying and going to academic heaven after years of relegation. Finally, I would be able to reel off the names of serious rock star academics like Huntington, Mamdani, and Sen at dinner tables and sound halfway intelligent. "Well I must say Collier's 'greed and grievance' model has huge gaps.... anyone for more fish?" Thus I finally encountered politics in the MSc core courses, ready to at last be on the more honoured track to success. Indeed, I gained valuable understanding in the discipline. And yet, when it came to choosing my option course, I once again followed the poetic paths of literature on which I also wrote my dissertation. It was the thesis that made me realise the vanity of hierarchical subject pedigrees: I thought my 'vast' background in African literature would afford me an easy ride, writing it was anything but. The nine months were a roller coaster of classes, presentations, essays, fieldwork, thesis and exams which had all of us physically and mentally exhausted at its end, in a way we had not anticipated. It was, regardless of any imagined subject pedigrees, "character building", as my classmate Sam Waldock wryly observed at the end. As I applied for jobs at the beginning of the break, I was never more confident of writing on my CV in bold 'able to meet deadlines', a feat I had never quite accomplished prior to this!

Maybe the thing I look back and wish for is that we had time to get to know each other better. Conversations were mostly the panicked "I'll never finish on time how many words have you got so far?"; the weary "attached find scanned chapters of....."; the bewildered "does anyone get Achille-Mbembe?"; and of course the enraged "who took the last Chabal and Daloz from the SSL!" However, having satisfied a taste for studying politics and realized once again my fervour for, and the value of, literature, I am now waiting to begin an MSt in Creative Writing at Kellogg College. Luckily, there won't be a hint of math, but lots of poetry and writing! I have no doubt the three 'loves', left so well polished after the MSc, will continue to serve me well.

Kingwa Kamencu is the author of *To Grasp at a Star* (EAEP, Nairobi), *The Shy Girl* (Oxford University Press, Nairobi) and an assortment of poems and short stories published in anthologies. *To Grasp at a Star* came in 1st Prize for the 2007 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature, Youth Fiction Category; 2nd runners up in the 2006 Wahome Mutahi Literary Prize and won the National Book Development Council of Kenya Literary Award in manuscript form in 2003.

Working for the Aga Khan

Salman Alibhai (2007-08)



Rich multi-disciplinary pedagogy, close mentorship from globally renowned thinkers, and linkages between the theoretical and pragmatic were aspects of Oxford's MSc program which helped me to launch an exciting and rewarding career after leaving the African Studies Centre.

The MSc program enabled me to pair my academic interests and passions with a career in and about the African continent. After leaving Oxford in 2007, I took on an internship posting with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of development agencies that operates in the areas of health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprise and the revitalisation of historic cities. For four months, I was based at Aga Khan Foundation Canada, a non-profit agency of the network focusing on social and economic development in Asia and Africa, where I conducted research and analysis on various development issues and projects.

After completing an internship I accepted an offer to join Aga Khan Foundation Canada managing a portfolio of development projects concentrated mainly in Eastern Africa. My interdisciplinary background through the MSc allowed me effectively to oversee a range of development interventions in different sectors. I spent time in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Mali, working on projects with diverse mandates ranging from supporting effective and culturally relevant early childhood education centres on the Swahili coast, to piloting micro-insurance schemes in urban centres in West Africa.

With the guidance of mentors in the African Studies Centre, I also continued to pursue my academic and research interests. In November 2008, I was seconded to the Global Centre for Pluralism to join a research team based in Kenya exploring prospects for advancing pluralism and strengthening civil society in the light of Kenya's 2008 post-election violence. In April 2009, I presented and published a paper on media portrayals of African conflicts at the International Society for African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS) 25th Annual Conference at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. I learned that my career development could go hand in hand with continued dedication to my research interests in the coming years.

A recent highlight of my work with the Aga Khan Development Network was my involvement in the launch of a new centre for research and dialogue on international development and cooperation, the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, in Ottawa, Canada. My experience with the Aga Khan Development Network in Canada and in Africa helped me to assist in developing some of the programmatic plans for the centre and in planning various dialogues and seminars related to global development.

I am currently working for the World Bank and am based in Juba, Sudan, where I am launching a study to evaluate the impact of a project focused on gender and economic empowerment. Here, I am utilizing the research and data analysis skills which I gained through the MSc programme, and building upon my expertise in the East African region.

Amongst the most enriching aspects of the MSc was its ability to prepare me for a wide variety of career opportunities in the field of international development. Having touched on politics, economics, anthropology, and history through an African lens, I am able to converse and engage on a diverse range of topics and issues related to the African continent. The strong, multi-disciplinary foundation gained from my time on the MSc is one which I am certain will continue to provide invaluable career returns in the years ahead.



The Democratization of Corruption?

Lillian Cherotich (2005–06)



I am currently studying towards my DPhil in the Politics Department at Oxford University. My thesis examines the influence of political corruption on the state in Africa during the early 1990s and focuses on the Goldenberg Affair in Kenya. This period of transition heralded tremendous optimism that democratization would lead to a reduction in corruption by injecting transparency and accountability into the government. Unfortunately this has not been the case and in some instances corruption has appeared to worsen. Indeed, in the

context of Kenya's transition to democracy (1990–1992) my research highlights the opportunities for political corruption that the process opened up.

Democratization in Kenya coincided with one of the biggest and most convoluted corruption scandals in Africa – the Goldenberg Affair. Goldenberg involved the fictitious exportation of gold and diamond jewellery from Kenya by a company called Goldenberg International Limited (GIL). This company was intimately connected with the Moi regime. Ostensibly, GIL's objective was to generate substantial foreign exchange to shore

up Kenya's dwindling reserves. It's primary motivation, however, was to generate significant campaign funds for the incumbent regime to ensure it won in the country's 1992 elections, the first multiparty elections since independence. In the first two years of GIL's operations (1990–1991), the company recorded impressive 'exports' of gold and diamond jewellery to Europe and the Middle East. This was despite the fact that Kenya has no deposits of diamonds and negligible deposits of gold. The true cost of the Affair will never be fully known. However, some have estimated that Goldenberg cost Kenya more than 10% of its GDP.

Using evidence from the Commission of Inquiry set up to look into the Affair by the NARC government in 2003, I research the Goldenberg Affair as a unique example of the interplay between corruption and democratization on the continent. Indeed, the effects of Goldenberg continue to be felt in Kenya's electoral system today where the links between grand corruption and election financing remain a feature of Kenyan competitive politics. As a case study, therefore, Goldenberg serves as an extraordinary example of the unexpected and unintended consequences of well-intentioned but badly managed transitions from authoritarianism. It shows that democracy can indeed exacerbate problems usually associated with authoritarian rule. This is particularly so where democratization is superficial and does not result in the alteration of the rules of political contestation. Moreover, where democratization is undertaken in poorly understood contexts in which state institutions are compromised, the result might be the 'democratization of corruption', to use Alan Doig's words. Goldenberg allows us to understand the challenges to democratization and democratic consolidation, which have broader application on the continent.

Banking for the future

Diana Kiluta (2007–08)



Like most of my classmates, I only had a vague idea of what I wanted to do upon completing the African Studies course. However, I had a clear goal to obtain a solid introduction to the myriad debates that inevitably surface in any discussion of Africa. During the course of the year, I examined the complex politics and history of the continent and looked at how the social sciences continue to shape popular discourse

and beliefs about Africa. It was an exhilarating time and I found many of my own perceptions of Africa challenged and some augmented. At the end of it all, I came to realise that no single course could provide all the answers that I sought; instead, I had gained tools that would allow me to continue down this path of learning and hopefully lead to interactions that would contribute to the growth of the continent.

I was faced with the challenge of finding a career path that would incorporate the skills I had acquired during the course. Having worked in the private sector for several years prior to coming to Oxford, I was disinclined to pursue avenues centred solely on research or academia. I felt that for the growing global interest in the African private sector to be instrumental in the growth of the continent, there needed to be a more thoughtful engagement between Africa and the rest of the world. Thus, I took up a role with a bank that was aiming to grow its business in Africa. At a time when the banking industry was in shambles, it was imperative that those looking to do business in Africa did not repeat the mistakes made in other parts of the world. They would also need to tailor their ventures in a manner that took each country's unique environment into account, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach for Africa.

Working with the bank has been an interesting journey so far. I have seen an air of expectation and optimism in various African nations – a marked contrast with the rest of the world. The continent has escaped largely unscathed from the global economic crises, and this in turn has forced a re-evaluation of Africa's prospects. Additionally, many in the private sector are realizing that working with businesses in different African countries requires a much deeper understanding of specific histories, politics and culture than were previously pursued. The MSc gave me the foundation that has allowed me a more nuanced view of Africa through the lens of the private sector.

ARCHIVE (Architecture for Health In Vulnerable Environments)

Peter Williams (2008–09)



Before starting the African Studies MSc I had worked as an architect in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa. The MSc allowed me to formalise my knowledge of African health systems and aid dependency, issues that are critical to my current work. Since completing the course I have established the ARCHIVE Institute. Our goal is to ensure that urban housing conditions are conducive to good health. We see innovative housing design not only as a means of easing urban poverty, but also as a means of tackling critical health issues. We are currently the only organisation working globally that prioritises

housing design as a key strategy in relieving the burden of disease. ARCHIVE is a registered charity in the UK, and along with our office in the US, we maintain regional managers in South Africa and other locations.

Our business model relies on hearing and understanding the needs of community and resident; on the ability to identify the most urgent health challenges and on the delivery of a targeted infrastructure response that best suits the recipient's needs. With the support and financial backing of a number of organisations including the Vodafone Foundation, the Millennium Award and a private Swiss foundation, we now actively manage projects in three countries.

An example of our work lies in North Region, Cameroon, where ARCHIVE is currently in the planning stage of a project that will use housing design as a means of tackling malaria. The region in question suffers a 100% risk of malaria infection: malaria causes 40% of deaths in health facilities, 50% of deaths in children under 5, and 30% of hospitalisations. Conventional efforts to tackle malaria such as Insecticide Treated Bed Nets (ITNs) are challenged by the parasite resistance to anti-malarial drugs. Despite 1 million ITNs being distributed, a Roll Back Malaria survey found that only 32% of households owned a net and that only 26% of children slept under them. One study (Nkuo-Akengi et al.) showed that despite the ITNs, malaria cases have actually increased among children and demonstrated that poor housing significantly increases the risk of transmission. ARCHIVE will employ simple but effective approaches like corrugated/tiled roofing and closed eaves to prevent mosquito entry.

ARCHIVE's growth is due entirely to the quality and efforts of the team, the vast majority of which work on a voluntary basis. A number of 2008 graduates from the MSc, including Ashley Leech and Paul McWilliams, have also been instrumental in the organisation's expansion. ARCHIVE's ongoing work relies on the support of its volunteers, and we are always looking for further input. Check out the website (www.archiveinstitute.org) to learn more and please do get in touch if you feel that you can help in any way.



Alumni Updates

Class of 2005-06

Don Goodson will be attending NYU Law in the fall to pursue a JD. Don got engaged to Carolyn Vine (MSc '07) on 17 April 2010.

Kim Chakanetsa has moved to New York to start a Masters degree in Broadcast Journalism at Columbia University School of Journalism.

Meghan Treleavan ▼ got married to Tom Shaw on 3 July at Oxford Town Hall followed by a reception at Linacre College. (see photo)



Class of 2006-07

Marissa Doran has just finished working at the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, where the bill she has been working on, which is designed to curb the trade in conflict minerals from the DRC, has just been passed. Marissa is off to Yale to do Law in the fall.

Sooji Kim is currently working for UNICEF Namibia and will be there for the next few of years as a monitoring and evaluation officer.

Class of 2007-08

Rachel Adams works as Regional Programme Manager for the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation in Johannesburg. The Foundation is a Fellowship Fund committed to funding full scholarships for university study and also runs programmes promoting leadership skills and entrepreneurialism.



Nana Antwi-Ansorge ▲ and her husband Joey Ansorge are happy to announce the birth of their son Daniel (See Photo)

Steven Costello has been working in NGO field office management since October 2009 as the Area Coordinator in Kenema District, Sierra Leone for GOAL, an Irish aid organization.

Ngozi Edeagu is currently self-employed as a business development consultant. She had previously been working at a start-up advertising agency in Lagos, Nigeria where she developed business proposals.

Anne Heffernan has been working as an Academic Associate with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies in Washington since 2008. In October she will return to Oxford to begin her DPhil in history.



Zoe Marks is currently completing a ten-month Fulbright Fellowship in Sierra Leone.

Anais Menard has been working as a research consultant for the NGO Aide et Action, an international NGO focused on achieving access to quality education for all. Her publication Martinenq A. & Ménard A. (2010) Education, rates falling! Aide et Action: Paris can be found on: http://www.aide-et-action.org/ewb_pages/p/publications.php. Anais will also be starting a PhD funded by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany.

Eirik Nielsen has just returned from Ghana where he has been working for Meltwater's NGO. He is now director of recruitment for Meltwater Group's Scandinavian offices.

Julianne Parker was granted a 9-month maternal health fellowship by the Ashoka Foundation to work for a local NGO in Sao Paulo, Brazil on a project to improve the maternal health of young, chemically-dependent mothers.

Cosanna Preston has just completed a fellowship with the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs where she conducted a study entitled: Mega-city, mega-voice? Citizenship participation in Lagos' urban development. She will soon begin a new role leading the research and planning department for C & F Porter Novelli, a public relations firm in Lagos, Nigeria.

Yvette Stephens has just completed her junior term training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

Martin Williams is living in Accra and working as a Trade Economist in Ghana's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Class of 2008-09

William Attwell is based at the Parliament of South Africa providing research and policy support to Democratic Alliance MPs and Shadow Ministers working on public sector policy. He also teaches economic history part-time at the University of Cape Town. He has recently been awarded a Fox International Fellowship by Yale University.

Sarah Brierley has spent the last year in Ghana working for the African Legislatures Project, and is now in Accra working on a DFID-funded Governance and Accountability project.

Jamie Cockfield is in Bushbuckridge, South Africa, doing research for his DPhil on gender and social change in Acornhoek since 1940. He and his wife Zenda are expecting their second daughter any day now.

Tom Mills is working for African Consolidated Resources, a minerals exploration company as part of a team building a gold mine.

Hashi Mohammed has been awarded the International Criminal Court, The Hague Award by Lincoln's Inn. Hashi will begin his pupillage at 39 Essex Street Chambers from October.

Janet Remington was promoted on returning to work after the course, and was appointed to oversee the Taylor & Francis South African journals operation.

Dominique Schafer worked as a freelance researcher and interned at Save the Children before starting at the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation in London as a researcher/writer.

Amanda Stone is teaching English Literature to Chinese students in Shanghai under the British A-Level System.

Takayuki Uchiyama is working for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Tokyo. He currently manages planning and facilitation of Japanese Grant Aid projects in the health sector, aiming to build health facilities and procure vaccines for developing countries.

Please contact us with your alumni updates. Email: alumni@afrika.ox.ac.uk

Keep up-to-date with alumni news at: www.africanstudies.ox.ac.uk/alumni



Class of 2009–10



Laurence Ball, UK
BA History (Manchester)

Dealing with Corruption in Kenya: Analysis of the Constituency Development Fund



Mike Bowerbank, USA
BA International Politics (Brigham Young University)

The Political Instrument of Decentralisation: State and Party Consolidation in Post-War Angola



Kathryn Brooks, UK
BA PPE (Oxford)

Custom, Conflict and Codification in Ghanaian Chieftaincy



Adrian Browne, UK
BA English Lit (Leeds)

Conservation Converts?: Africanising Wildlife Conservation, Uganda National Parks, c1950-c1973



Emma Cavendish, UK
BA History of Art (Leeds)

Constructing Identity among the Somali youth in London



Hilary Clauson, Canada
BA International Studies (CA Simon Fraser)

Controlling Leisure: Girls' pastimes in Dzaeleka Refugee Settlement



Zoe Cormack, UK
BSc Anthropology (UCL)

Between the town and the cattle camp: Community Animal Health Workers in Southern Sudan



Karol Czuba, Poland
BA History & Politics (Durham)

Uganda, the World Bank, and Neoliberalism: Negotiating Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian World.



Henry Donati, UK
BA Theology (Cambridge)

'A very antagonistic spirit': Elliot Kamwana, Christianity and the end of the world in Nyasaland



Becky Driscoll, UK
BA History (Exeter)

Power, panic or poverty: explaining child witchcraft accusations in Southern Nigeria



Chris Duffy, UK
BA English Lit (Exeter)

Reassessing the existence of a 'Third Force': Political violence in South Africa, 1990-1994



Dan Hodgkinson, UK
BA World History (Kings)

State Terror, Student Activism, and Revolutionary Masculinity



Chris Hopkins, UK
BA History (Exeter)

Getting Behind the Patriotic Front in Zambia: The Organization & Mobilization of an Opposition Party



Marion Isaacs, South Africa
BA(Hons) History (Witwatersrand)

The Swenkas: Masculinity and Representation in the city of Johannesburg



Leanne Johansson, South Africa
B.ScSci.Hons Psychology (Cape Town)

Dining on Crocodiles and Other Tales: Zimbabwean Migrants' Border-Crossing Stories



Kingwa Kamencu, Kenya
MA English Lit (Nairobi)

Literary Gangsters?
Kwani, Radical Poetics and
the Kenyan Post-Election
Crisis



Rhian Keyse, UK
BA Modern History (Cambridge)

'By my very nature, I
cannot kill': Gendered
narratives in the trials
of women accused of
genocide in Rwanda



Lena Koeber, Germany
BA Modern History & Politics
(Oxford)

'Us' and 'Them'.
An Analysis of
Populist Discourse in
Contemporary Tanzanian
Politics



Dan Paget, UK
BA PPE (Oxford)

The Internal Politics of the
MMD, Zambia



Joe Philp, UK
BA History (Cambridge)

On se défend: an
ethnographic study of
youth in Lomé, Togo



Lucy Plint, UK
BA English Lit (Cambridge)

The Plays of Miracle and
Wonder: The Theatre of
Healing?



Ida Ragnarsson, Sweden
BA Politics and Development
Studies (SOAS)

Tomorrow is a long way:
who is thinking of the
future of civil society in
Kenya?



Max Schaub, Germany
MPhil War and Peace Studies
(Oslo)

Mobile phone use and
mobility in the context of
trans-Saharan migration



Marcia Schenck, Germany
BA International Relations and
African Studies (Mount Holyoke)

Land struggles and identity:
comparative case studies of
San self-representation in
southern Africa



Duncan Scott, South Africa
BA Film and Media Production
(Cape Town)

Building Solidarity: Foreign
Nationals, Community
Participation and Social
Cohesion in Imizamo
Yethu, Cape Town



Ruth Stewart, UK
BA(Hons) European Politics
(Nottingham)

'No Man is an Island' the
Isolationist Tendencies
of INGOs and their
implications for Education
in Sierra Leone



Samuel Waldock, UK
BA Human and Social Geography
(Cambridge)

Di War Don Don? Inter-
Party Violence in Sierra
Leone 2002-2010



Jacob Wiebel, Germany
BA(Hons) African Studies (SOAS)

Dealing with dissent: The
problems of Authoritarianism
and Political Plurality in
Ethiopian politics, 1969-
1978

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