Human encounters with orangutans in Borneo

LATEST recruit to the department **Liana Chua** is just off to Borneo to kick-start her new project on orangutan conservation, which, among other things, will be addressing hot questions about human-animal relationships. Her retreat to the field follows the publication of an impressive two books since her arrival in October 2011: the first, *The Christianity of culture: Conversion, ethnic citizenship and the matter of religion in Malaysian Borneo*, draws on her earlier research on Christianity; the second – *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Power* – is a co-edited volume.

Research on young Rwandan migrants

LECTURER **Will Rollason** (right) has been off last term using a Brunel research award on his project ‘Urban development, youth and the future in Kigali, Rwanda’. The grant enables him to undertake seven months of fieldwork in Kigali, Rwanda. Will is currently in Rwanda investigating how young migrants to Kigali understand and engage with processes of urban development, and you can follow him ahead of his return to the classroom in the autumn on his own his blog…

http://kigaliproject.blogspot.co.uk

Brunel BSc student Tess is on the road to China

Ever since taking a gap year teaching English in rural China I have wanted to return, and my first Anthropology placement gave me the perfect opportunity to do so, *writes Tess Sadation* (left). This time I worked at an eco-tourism project run by a Tibetan entrepreneur, meanwhile researching the effects of domestic and international tourism on the local community and improving my Chinese and Tibetan by speaking with local villagers and interviewing them to write reports for the eco-lodge. I will never forget my experience there and the inspirational people who welcomed me with such compassion. Because of their motivation, I felt enabled to share their spirit with others here in the UK by presenting at events such as the first national undergraduate anthropology conference in Kent (which Brunel funded me to attend). From my placement I have learnt that learning itself is continuous and that first hand experience and observation is essential to understand humanity. For this reason, I encourage students to grab any opportunity: placements not only enhance their career, but will develop them as a person.

**Other BSc Anthropology students recently visited locations including Nepal, India, Peru, Ecuador, and South Africa to undertake fieldwork placements.**
Burning issues: parasites, power and poverty

Melissa Parker’s pioneering research on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in Africa has been causing a major stir in development circles recently, especially following a filmed lecture she produced with her anthropologist husband Tim Allen that has been viewed more than 3,000 times on YouTube.

Melissa’s work demonstrates that competition for multi-million pound grants to tackle debilitating parasitic diseases in the developing world means that serious concerns about whether current drug programmes actually work are being side-lined.

Expressing her views in a letter published in The Lancet, the director of our Centre for International Research in Medical Anthropology (CRIMA) has subsequently been on the road making the case at major conferences in London and in Antwerp.

She returns to Brunel after two terms of research leave in September 2012, and is looking forward to sharing her latest findings with new students on her medical anthropology modules.

Brunel anthropologists get the student vote

MORE than half of the department’s teaching staff – as well as our post-graduate administrator – were nominated by students for accolades in Brunel Student Union’s recent Student-Led Teaching Awards, showing that our teaching team really is succeeding in inspiring, engaging and challenging our students.

James Staples topped the list this year by also making it to the final shortlist of three for the Personal Tutor of the Year Award, and – at a glittering awards evening – was strongly commended for his commitment to the student experience.

Workshop unites experts on child science and psyexpertise

BRUNEL’S Centre for Research in International Medical Anthropology (CRIMA), together with the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI), held a successful two-day workshop at the end of May entitled ‘The rise of child science and psyexpertise’.

Organised by the department’s Dominique Behague, keynote speakers included Professors Allan Young from McGill University, Rayna Rapp from New York University, and Richard Rechtman of the EHESS (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales). The workshop featured presentations from an interdisciplinary group of 14 scholars from around the world. ‘It was fantastic,’ Dominique said. ‘We brought together people from different disciplines who look at the question of childhood and the emergence of expertise about the child from very different perspectives.’ The anthropology department is also home to a research centre for issues relating to childhood and youth.

ORGANISED by Peggy Froerer in December 2011, our Centre for Anthropological Research on Childhood, Youth and Education hosted a two-day workshop on ‘Schooling the Modern Way’. More than twenty international scholars participated in this event, which engaged with taken-for-granted ideologies and realities that underpin contemporary school education.
Charlotte Gryseels, MSc Medical Anthropology, was recently awarded a full PhD scholarship to undertake research on the control of malaria on the Cambodia/Thailand border. Her research builds on the fieldwork she undertook for her MSc dissertation.

Georgina Pearson, also MSc in Medical Anthropology, has won a full scholarship to undertake research at the LSE for a PhD on the control of neglected tropical diseases in northern Uganda and South Sudan. This research builds directly on the fieldwork she undertook on the border of northern Uganda and South Sudan for her MSc dissertation.

Laura Storm, another Medical Anthropology MSc, recently published an article – including her fieldwork material – with Professor Tim Allen entitled: ‘Quests for therapy in northern Uganda: healing at Laropi revisited.’

Nick Dobbs, who graduated from our Education, Childhood and Youth MSc last year has won a fully funded PhD studentship at Edinburgh to study the impact of living with a child with epilepsy.

Maddy Wright, a Medical Anthropology student who undertook fieldwork on trachoma in northwestern Ethiopia for her dissertation, recently presented her findings as a poster at the London Deanery Public Health annual conference in November 2011. It was awarded first prize.

The Cecil Helman Scholarship Fund was set up to honour the life and work of Professor Cecil Helman (1944-2009), a leading light in international medical anthropology. The scholarship aims to provide fieldwork support for between two and four students currently enrolled in the MSc in Medical Anthropology at Brunel University to undertake empirical fieldwork. At Brunel, all our Master’s degrees (whether full- or part-time) combine intensive coursework, year-long training in ethnographic research methods, and up to two months’ fieldwork leading to a dissertation.

Thea Vidnes recently graduated in Medical Anthropology and secured a full PhD scholarship from Brunel University to undertake research on maternal mortality in Nepal. Ben Bowles, a graduate from Durham, won a scholarship on the same scheme, and has joined us to embark on a project about canal boat communities, along with Harold Herrewegh from the LSE, who is working on social mobility and education among Turkish migrants in Norway. Meanwhile, Tanyel Oktar, a former Brunel MSc student on our education, childhood and youth programme, has just won a prestigious Commonwealth Scholarship to start her PhD in September and will be working on educational practices amongst the Turkish Cypriot community.
Promoting ‘narrative ethnography’

**A NEW digital journal, Anthropology of This Century, was launched recently (see [http://aotcpress.com](http://aotcpress.com)).** Run by Charles Stafford of LSE, the journal publishes serious non-academic articles on anthropology. The second issue includes a review article by **Andrew Beatty** (below) on fieldwork fictions, and draws on his growing reputation for well-written ethnography aimed at an audience beyond the regular academic suspects. Andrew also has an article in the fourth issue called ‘Return to the Field’ in which he reflects on changes in field (and fieldworker) over the long term. He will give the prestigious Malinowski Memorial Lecture at the LSE in May 2013.

![Andrew Beatty](image)

**Poetry and politics of archives**

**BARBARA Knorpp** has been inspiring her students again this year with her unique take on anthropology through film. Having spent so long in the national film archives sourcing visual materials to stimulate students with, she decided to make the most of her time by using the visits to carry out a full ethnography of the British Film Institute’s archives. Most recently presented at the Anthropology in London event at UCL – an event that Brunel Anthropology is centrally involved in organizing – her fascinating new material should make it into publication within the next year or two. Watch this space...

**On the conference circuit again**

**HEAD of department Eric Hirsch** set off for Bergen at the end of June as an invited speaker at The Meanings and Uses of Cosmopolitanism workshop. The workshop, drawing international researchers, was held at Bergen’s Hotel Admiral and was co-organized by Kathinka Frøystad and Vigdis Broch-Due. The workshop is part of their joint project ‘Cosmopolitanism and Its Paradoxes: Diversity, Development and the Divine’. Participation in the workshop is by invitation only. Ever in demand Eric was also asked to be a discussant at one-day symposium on The Creativity of Property at University College London (UCL).

**New Master’s degree in Development**

**AFTER years of careful planning, 2012 sees the launch of an exciting new degree programme in the Anthropology of International Development and Humanitarian Assistance.** The degree also opens up new module options for our final year undergraduate students. Contact our PG Admissions Administrator **Helen Stevenson** (email socscipgenq@brunel.ac.uk) for more information.

**HOT OFF THE PRESSES!**

BRUNEL anthropologists have a reputation for cutting-edge research, and you can find the proof in our impressive publications lists. In addition to numerous articles in leading journals, recent books from the staff include **Liana Chua’s The Christianity of Culture** (Palgrave); **Will Rollason’s We are playing football** (Cambridge Scholars) and **Andrew Beatty’s A Shadow Falls: In the heart of Java**. This year also saw the publication of two ethnographic collections on suicide from **James Staples**: a special issue of Contributions to Indian Sociology in February, and a collection of essays co-edited with a former research fellow, **Tom Widger**, in the journal Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry. **Peggy Froerer’s** special issue of Anthropology & Education Quarterly on learning, livelihoods and social mobility is also imminent...

**Student leaders**

ONE of our own BSc students, Craig Best (left), has been raising the department’s profile as the student union’s vice-president for academic representation this year. Before returning to the classroom in October Craig will be heading off to Nepal for the second of his two fieldwork placements. For more information on our exciting placements programme, check out the YouTube link below!

[**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9S1_0iHjBU&feature=player_embedded**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9S1_0iHjBU&feature=player_embedded)