

News release



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Museum of Natural History and Oxford Neuroscience win Public Engagement Award for ‘Brain Diaries’

Oxford University Museum of Natural History and Oxford Neuroscience have won a Building Capacity Award in this year’s Vice-Chancellor’s Public Engagement with Research Awards, which celebrate public engagement work across the University. The announcement was made at an awards ceremony at the Museum of Natural History on 28 June hosted by Vice-Chancellor Professor Louise Richardson.

The award was given for the Museum of Natural History exhibition, *Brain Diaries*, developed in partnership with Oxford Neuroscience, and accompanied by a public event programme and online digital resources including an animation by Oxford Sparks (www.braindiaries.org).



1 Touchable 3D-printed brains in the Brain Diaries exhibition at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Brain Diaries is the latest and largest installment of the museum's Contemporary Science and Society series, enabling researchers at all career levels to leverage the museum's experience and skills in public engagement, while accessing the museum's publics to engage in the research.

Launched in March 2017, the programme and exhibition have reached an audience of more than 45,000 people from Oxfordshire and beyond in the first two months of opening. More than 150 research scientists from four University departments and over 20 support staff have contributed to *Brain Diaries*.

The exhibition presents current understanding of the healthy brain from pre-birth to old age, while the public programme explores translational and clinical neuroscience research. The exhibition also promotes active public participation in research, enabling visitors to take part in research studies and contribute new ideas for brain investigations. For blind and partially-sighted visitors, the museum has held hands-on tours of the exhibition using 3D-printed brains for a tactile experience.



2 Dr Christopher-James Harvey of the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences talks to an audience about the science of sleep as part of the NeuroNight event at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History

The Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement with Research Awards recognise and reward those at the University who undertake high-quality engagement activities and have contributed to building capacity in this area. *Brain Diaries* was one of three winners in the Building Capacity category of the awards.

Christopher Kennard, Head of Medical Sciences Division and Emeritus Professor of Clinical Neurology says:

“We all look forward to the opportunity to engage with the public through the museums. It is particularly useful for younger researchers to have to develop ways of conveying complex information and I know they always find it very rewarding.”

Professor Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor says:

“I have been deeply impressed by the quality of the public engagement with research projects submitted for this year’s awards. The breadth and diversity of the activities taking place show how seriously the University takes its commitment to public engagement.”

Professor Alison Woollard, the University’s Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research says:

“Public engagement enriches both research and society and the University is committed to enabling our researchers to inspire, consult and collaborate with the

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public. I'm delighted that we are able to recognise and highlight the fantastic work our researchers are doing and hope these awards encourage more colleagues across the University to carry out their own public engagement with research."

For further information:

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Notes to editors

Brain Diaries material

Brain Diaries website: www.braindiaries.org

Brain Diaries YouTube playlist: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxCYszIdeUZEc0XQ2crxNkykFpDgtpevz>

Brain Diaries Storify: <https://storify.com/morethanadodo/brain-diaries>

Blogs posts and articles:

<https://medium.com/oxford-university/behind-the-scenes-at-the-brain-diaries-exhibition-30733c907d39-.i7ocmuu3o>

<http://oxhc.co.uk/Brain-Diaries-In-conversation-with-Professor-Zoltan-Molnar.asp>

<https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/news/the-brain-diaries-interview-with-professor-chris-kennard>

About the awards

The Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement with Research Awards recognise and reward those at the University who undertake high-quality engagement activities and have contributed to building capacity in this area. The awards are awarded in three categories – Early Career Researcher, Building Capacity and Projects. Entrants can be at any level in their career and activities of any scale are welcome.

Winning entries receive recognition for their achievements at the Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement with Research Awards Ceremony that will take place on 28 June 2017. The Vice-Chancellor's prize will also be announced at the ceremony and receive a cash prize of £1,500.

About the Museum of Natural History

Founded in 1860 as the centre for scientific study at the University of Oxford, the Museum of Natural History now holds the University's internationally significant collections of entomological, geological and zoological specimens. Housed in a stunning Pre-Raphaelite-inspired example of neo-Gothic architecture, the Museum's growing collections underpin a broad programme of natural environment research, teaching and public engagement.

In 2015, the Museum was a **Finalist in the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year**. In 2016, it won the top accolade, Best of the Best, in the **Museums + Heritage Awards**.

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