

## Our on-going mission

Transforming lives and unlocking potential

## Our Blue Planet

Exploring the amazing worlds in our oceans

## A turning point for breast cancer surgery?

A new study could provide a huge breakthrough



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## Welcome and thank you for all your support



As you know, people of all ages and backgrounds study with us, for all sorts of reasons – to update their skills, get a qualification, boost their career, change direction, and to prove themselves. The OU is open to them all.

Whenever I go to Open University degree ceremonies I am always moved when I hear stories about the journeys many graduates have been through to get to that great day. Often graduates bring those who supported them through their studies to the ceremony; the family or friends who encouraged them to keep pushing forward through the next TMA

or examination, to the point where they cross the stage and graduate.

I want to thank you for the part **you** play in supporting our students. Whether that is supporting students with disabilities, or helping them financially - you have helped and encouraged them through their journeys.

Thank you so much for your generosity. You help to make our students' dreams a reality.



Karen Hart

Deputy Director of Development:  
Alumni Engagement

# Turning 50: a time for reflection, action and continued commitment

*“... our plans for a university of the air. It's designed to provide an opportunity for those people who, for one reason or another, have not been able to take advantage of higher education.” Harold Wilson, 1969*

The Open University is an institution unlike any other, initially conceived in the 1960s as a ‘University of the Air’ by Harold Wilson, the then Prime Minister. The concept was met by opposition at first, but the University received its Royal Charter on the 23 April 1969, and has since taught over 2 million students.

The OU has always aimed to break down barriers. It is renowned as a world leader in flexible, innovative distance learning and is uniquely placed to understand the needs of part-time students, some combining their learning while earning. People from all walks of life, from 18-98, from any background are achieving more than they ever dreamed possible.

Much of the work of the OU in the early years was pioneering in nature. The development of the use of broadcasting for education and “distance learning” was captured by the academic staff in reports, academic papers, publications and late-night TV programmes. Move forward 50 years, and today’s students embrace all elements of technology with online modules, podcasts and prime time TV.

In the 1980s, the film *Educating Rita* hit the screens starring Julie Walters and Michael Caine. Since then there continues to be a wide range of TV and Radio programmes co-produced by The OU and the BBC – many of which you will recognise and some you may not be so familiar with, including *Blue Planet* and *Blue Planet II*; *Flatpack Empire* (the story of IKEA); *Calculating Ada: The Countess of Computing* on BBC4 and *Thinking Allowed* (Radio 4).

The University has long-standing partnerships with national institutions. We have worked with the BBC for 45 years and 220 million viewers have watched our television programmes produced in partnership with the BBC. We have also worked with 30,000 leading corporations and businesses including the NHS and 88 of the 100 FTSE companies have sponsored staff on OU modules.



In January 1990, Brenda Tombs became the 100,000th graduate, and the 1990s saw a decade of technological expansion and curriculum development.

The OU is a leader in providing free, informal learning, via online platforms such as OpenLearn and FutureLearn. We have had 50.4 million visitors to OpenLearn since 2006, offering 900 free courses, accessed by people from 239 countries. Launched in 2013, FutureLearn now has over 7 million users. There have been 69.9 million downloads from our iTunesU site.

Today’s OU remains true to its open entry policy. The Open University has transformed millions of lives, but millions more remain unlocked. It is time to spark our revolutionary spirit again, to share the gift of education with all those who have a dream, to believe they can achieve it and succeed. Your support can help students overcome barriers to learning, offering the opportunity to embark on a life-changing study journey.

**For more history about the OU, why not visit the OU Digital Archive in the library section of the website? [open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/the-open-university-archive](https://open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/the-open-university-archive)**





### Frank Neale Undergraduate Bursaries

From a generous donation of £50,000, we are proud to launch the Frank Neale Bursaries. Like you, Frank Neale, OU graduate and former Member of the OU Council, believes that where you start in life shouldn't limit where you go. Through his generous donation the bursaries will be awarded to students wishing to study at undergraduate level from low income households or underrepresented groups, who may not otherwise have been able to access higher education.

As part of the OU's 50th Anniversary campaign Open up the Future, the strand Open Up Opportunity seeks to establish a major financial support programme to empower disadvantaged and underrepresented students.



## Continuing to break down barriers

2017 saw the launch of the new undergraduate Bursary Scheme. The bursary is designed to support students with the cost of their studies, helping them to buy books or laptops and pay for travel to and from tutorials. There are up to 50 bursaries available each year and these will support students through the first 180 credits of study.

The support of generous donors means that students can set aside financial worries, and focus on fulfilling their true potential.

Every new bursary is a life changed, a positive influence created, and countless expectations defied.

The OU is the number one university in **Northern Ireland** for 'Overall Student Satisfaction'

In 2016/17  
**23,630**  
students with disabilities chose to study with us

The OU in **Scotland** delivers Degree-level learning to college students on Campus

We are helping more school students in **Wales** progress to University

**55%**  
of OU students in **England** come from disadvantaged backgrounds

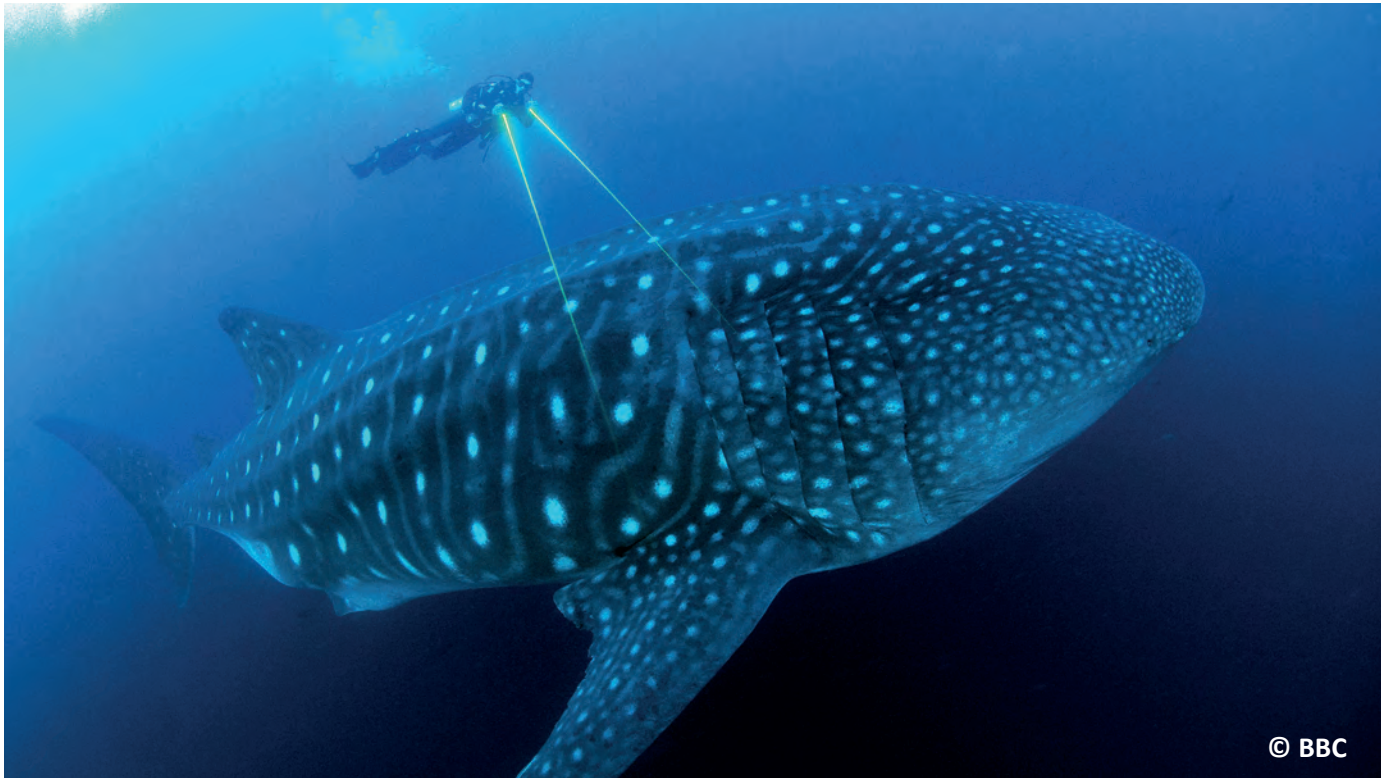
We are currently Europe's largest University with

**173,927**  
students

Thank you for your generous support and allowing students to open up their future.  
Find out more at [giving.open.ac.uk](https://giving.open.ac.uk)







# Blue Planet II - our world, our oceans

BBC Natural History Unit in partnership with The Open University

Blue Planet II, a seven-part series presented by Sir David Attenborough, was broadcast on BBC One at the end of 2017 and it represents a fantastic new chapter of collaboration between the BBC Natural History Unit and The Open University Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Faculty. A generation on from the BBC Natural History Unit's award-winning series The Blue Planet, Blue Planet II used trailblazing breakthroughs in marine science and cutting-edge technology to explore new worlds and reveal the very latest discoveries across our planet; from the Arctic and Antarctic to the coral reefs of the Pacific Ocean.

This landmark series brought viewers face to face with unexpected new landscapes and introduced compelling contemporary stories from our ocean – if you saw it could you ever forget the fish that leaps to pluck birds from the sky? Or the mesmerising footage of the life around a deep sea super-hot water vent?

Of course, it took a lot of effort to make. Over more than four years the Blue Planet II team mounted 125 expeditions, visited 39 countries, filmed across every ocean and spent over 6,000 hours diving underwater to bring us closer than ever before to the captivating lives of some of the most extraordinary sea creatures and the strangest environments. The Open University has also been involved from the very beginning. The Broadcast and Partnerships team commissioned and have worked with OU academics and the production team since 2014. Four academics from the STEM Faculty advised on the series on behalf of the University throughout production. Dr Pallavi Anand, Dr Mark Brandon, Dr Mandy Dyson and Dr Phil Sexton worked with the BBC team providing science background to underpin the general series narrative. Within the partnership these academics ensured that the production team understood the most relevant Open University marine research, and advised where



Sir David Attenborough who has worked on many OU/ BBC collaborations

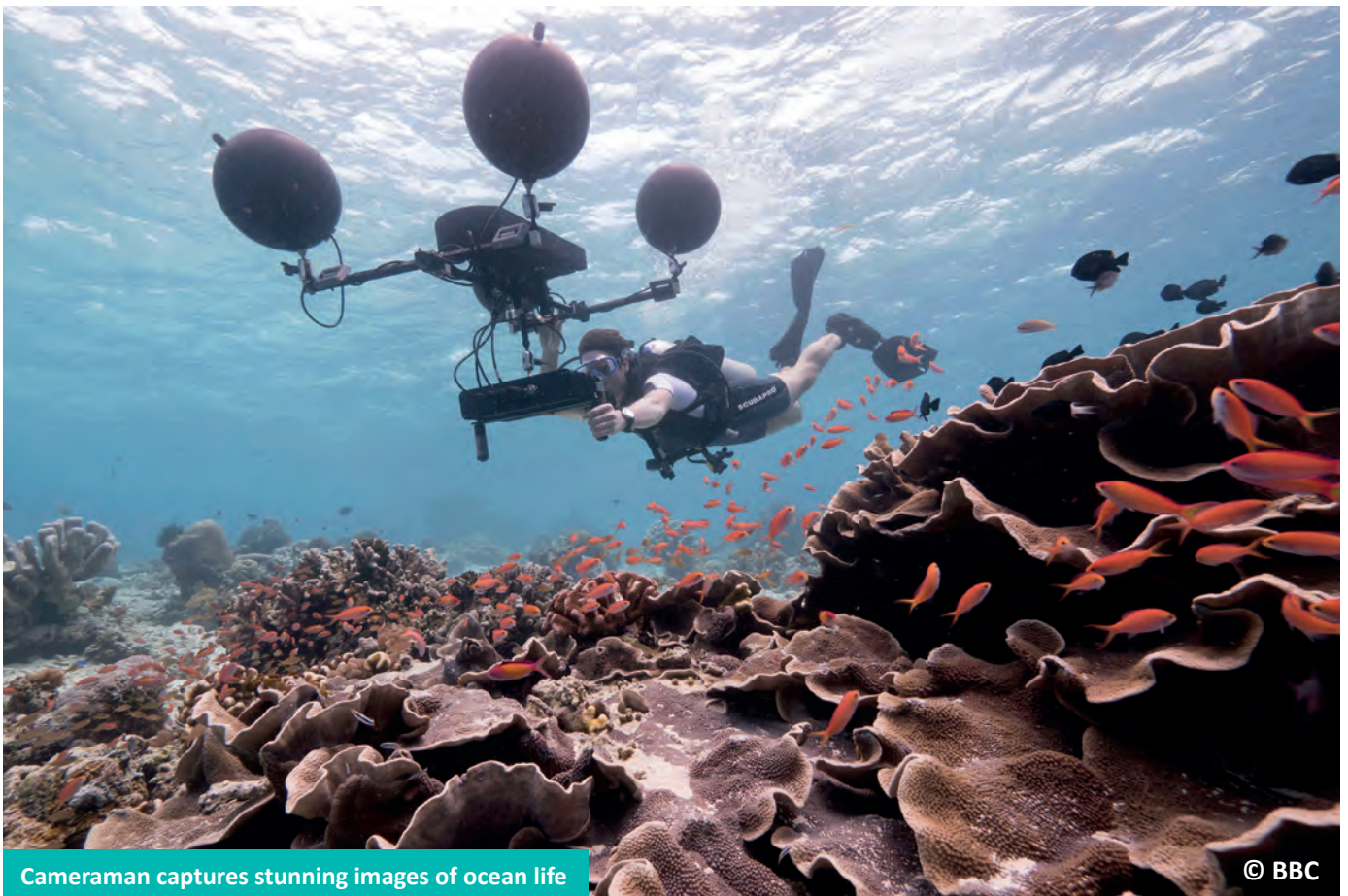
appropriate. The University's involvement with the television programme enables access to unique broadcast assets for teaching students. Instead of having an academic in front of a whiteboard talking about, for example, under sea water vents, we can use unique world beating footage from Blue Planet II to give our students access to the best possible material for learning. Part of the academic team's role is to identify which clips can be used for both our current and future undergraduate modules.

To say the series has been a success seems like an understatement. The audience has been huge with

currently just under 111 million views in total – and that is just the UK (episode 1 was also the BBC iPlayer's most popular programme of the year). By the time the series has been watched in North America, this spring, the audience will top ¼ billion people. With our educational mission in mind, the fact that the series was a big hit with younger audiences (14 million UK viewers aged 16 - 34) is particularly exciting.

The Open University also supported the series and provided an opportunity for audiences to learn more by producing a spectacular free "Oceans" wall poster; featuring illustrations of many fascinating sea creatures, and articles written by the OU academic team highlighting the science of the seas, and critically our environmental impact on the oceans.

*For centuries humankind has regarded the vastness of our oceans as an inexhaustible source of food, a useful conduit for transporting goods and a convenient dumping ground for waste – too immense in size to be susceptible to our environmental negligence. But human irresponsibility is pushing our oceans (and the life-support services they provide) to their limits.*



Cameraman captures stunning images of ocean life



Our poster, like the series, has reached new levels of success, with approximately 500,000 requests, along with an unprecedented number of visits to the OU's OpenLearn broadcast site.

Dr Mark Brandon was a consultant on the original Blue Planet series 18 years ago, and he has seen that one of the huge advances with Blue Planet II is how the impact of humans on the ocean has been highlighted,

*"It has been so powerful to work with a team unafraid of being honest about human impact on the global ocean. Powerful images of plastics floating in the seas, and for example the amount of human waste ingested by seabirds, including wandering albatross on prime-time landmark television and coral bleaching through warming oceans are important. It is only through such honesty that we can ever hope to develop policy responses to such tragedies."*

## And Blue Planet II has been mentioned in the House...

The UK Government Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, stated in the Autumn 2017 Budget Speech:

*"Audiences across the country, glued to Blue Planet II, have been starkly reminded of the problems of plastics pollution."*

*The UK led the world on climate change agreements.*

*And is a pioneer in protecting marine environments.*

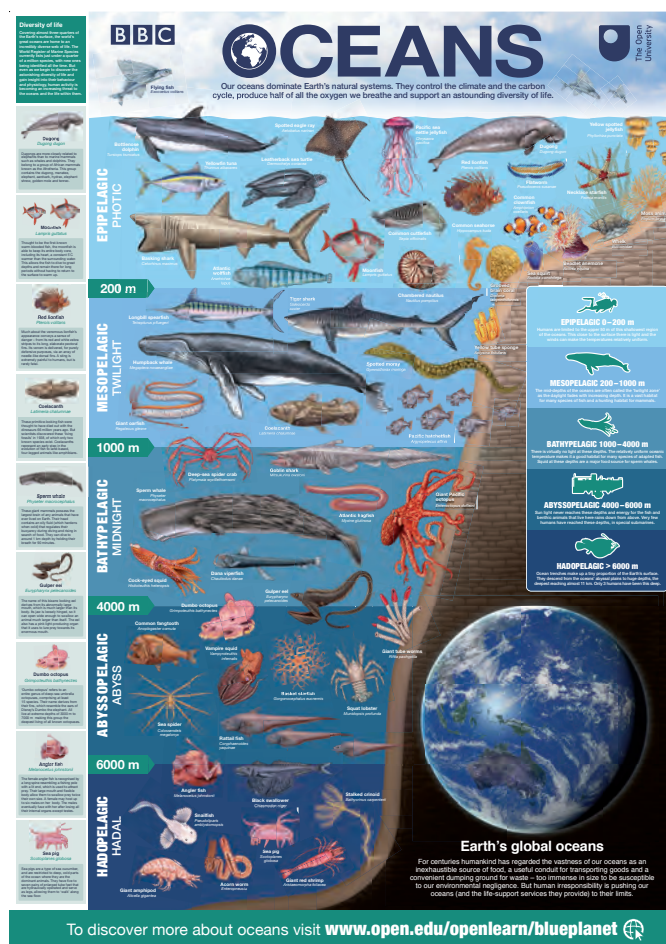
*Now I want us to become a world leader in tackling the scourge of plastic, littering our planet and our oceans.*

*With My Right Honourable Friend the Environment Secretary I will investigate how the tax system and charges on single-use plastic items can reduce waste."*

The BBC believe the series has impacted the development of the HM Government 25 year environmental plan A *Green Future* by presenting such compelling evidence; in an interview in January 2018 the Prime Minister Theresa May said,

*"Nobody who watched Blue Planet will doubt the need for us to do something."*

We are rightly proud that we can tie so many of our Open University mission goals in education, research and impact together, and look forward to our future broadcasts!



For more information or to download the poster, visit OpenLearn ([open.edu/openlearn](http://open.edu/openlearn)) and search for Blue Planet II.



# NEWS IN BRIEF...

## For those who served - WE can give back



An enormous thank you to everyone who generously gave to our latest appeal to support the Disabled Veterans Scholarship Fund. Over 800 alumni and supporters have made donations totalling £40,000 to help veterans with a disability unlock their full potential.

For veterans like John, (pictured) leaving the forces can bring a sudden loss of purpose. Everything changes. An injury in the line of duty abruptly robs them of both a career and a way of life. Though they gain many skills in service, many injured veterans will discover they don't have the educational background required for 'Civvy Street'.

This is why The Open University has developed The Disabled Veterans Scholarship Fund, which is the first of its kind in the UK. It aims to offer not only financial support for disabled veterans embarking on higher education study, but also vital care and advice to help them succeed and start the next chapter of their lives.

From new engineers and mechanics, to team leaders, teachers, entrepreneurs and CEOs, the new fund aims

From Spring 2018 we will be accepting applications, aiming to provide a full scholarship and support package for up to 100 undergraduates, plus a bespoke disability and careers support service.

to support disabled veterans to fulfil the potential they demonstrated within the armed forces.

### The Disabled Veterans Scholarship Dinner

In October 2017, 80 of the OU's supporters and friends joined Peter Horrocks, the Vice-Chancellor, for a dinner to celebrate the newly launched Disabled Veterans Scholarship Fund, which raised over £20,000 to support the programme.



During the evening, guests heard from a variety of inspirational speakers, including Cherry Day (Vice President Equal Opportunities, Open University Students' Association). Cherry shared her own experience as a student with disabilities and of her father who was a member of the armed forces and suffered from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

Thank you to everyone who donated before, during and after the event.

**It's not too late to help unlock the potential of disabled veterans and transform their lives. To make a gift, visit [www.open.ac.uk/donatenow](http://www.open.ac.uk/donatenow)**



## Opportunities to recycle and help others

Nearly twenty years ago, OU alumna Jo Hunt had an inspirational idea when she and her family realised that their attic was groaning under the weight of OU course material which they had added to over the years, fully intending to read again but never quite finding the time. Guessing that other students were in the same position, the website was set up for students who want to buy and sell second-hand OU course material and set books. Since its inception, tens of thousands of books

have found good homes throughout the world.

To date, Jo has raised an incredible £210,000, in support of the University and its students. Thank you to Jo and everyone that has used the website.

**If you would like more information on how to sell or buy old OU course material please contact: [www.universitybooksearch.co.uk](http://www.universitybooksearch.co.uk)**



# Helping young people build a more resilient and financially secure future

**Managing My Money for Young Adults** was launched on OpenLearn in November 2017 to better support 16-18 year olds as they become responsible for their own financial future and has already been viewed by over 16,000 people. This was possible thanks to the generosity of the Chartered Accountants Livery Charity.

New research from The Open University Business School (OUBS) reveals one in seven 18 year olds are already in debt. Excluding student borrowing, these 18 year olds have already racked up debts on credit cards, unauthorised overdrafts, store cards and catalogues. Almost two-thirds of this age group believe this could have been avoided if they'd received more effective personal finance education and 94% say it would have been prevented with some form of guidance or support.

To combat this growing problem, OUBS has joined forces with University Challenge star and Arithmophobia expert, Bobby Seagull, and MoneySavingExpert's Martin Lewis, to develop a free course specifically designed for the financial education needs of 16-18 year olds. This course on the OU OpenLearn platform is delivered via video content, animations, case studies, activities and quizzes. It provides 24 hours of learning broken into eight sessions, and offers learners a strong foundation of personal finance knowledge including sessions on understanding tax, being a savvy shopper, living in shared households, credit ratings, mortgages and pensions. It even features a bespoke app which will help to manage budgets easily and effectively, and step-by-step animations to guide you through tricky financial processes.

At the end of December 2017 nearly 1,000 people had enrolled on the **Managing My Money for Young Adults** course.

*"This is a powerful initiative which I'm proud to be a part of. I've seen the problems created by poor financial management from every side of the fence; working as a trader at Lehman Brothers right through to the financial collapse in 2008, as a Senior Associate at PwC, and in my current role as a secondary school maths teacher. The core problem is clear to me. There are too many highly educated young people stepping out into the world without the knowledge they need to make informed financial decisions. Prevention really is better than cure when it comes to personal finance and this course is a great way for young people to help themselves, above and beyond what they are taught in school and college."*

Bobby Seagull

Bobby Seagull, University Challenge Star and Arithmophobia Expert

To access these courses, visit [open.edu/openlearn](https://open.edu/openlearn) and search for "Managing my money"

## Visionary and committed to education for all



The OU would like to thank Dangoor Education for another year of generous patronage of the Informal to Formal Accelerator Project. The project has continued to provide key support toward the creation and maintenance of essential STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Open Education Resources (OERs – free courses accessed via OpenLearn), enjoyed by thousands of learners each year.

There are now 17 OERs supported by Dangoor Education, with plans in progress to increase this to 25 by the end of 2018. The OERs, encompassing a range of subjects from health to space are suitable for learners of varying levels of educational experience and can be found on FutureLearn [[open.edu/futurelearn](https://open.edu/futurelearn)] and OpenLearn [[open.edu/openlearn](https://open.edu/openlearn)]. We are grateful to have a partner with such passion and belief in the OU.

# A turning point for breast cancer surgery?

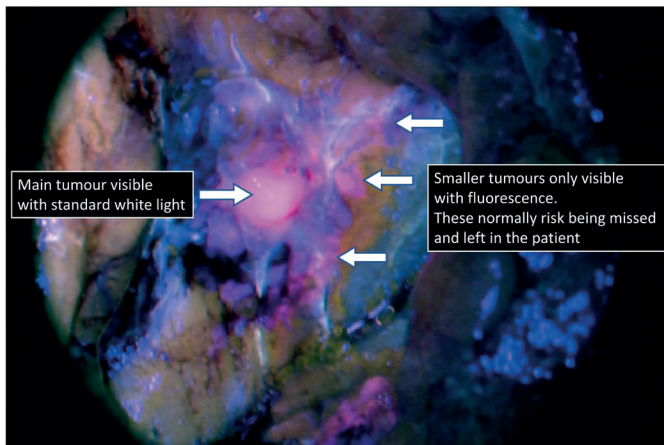
A study that will transform the lives of thousands of women

Every year 42,000 women in England undergo surgery to remove a breast tumour. Of these, over 8,400 are recalled for further surgery within 3 months because cancerous cells were missed during the initial surgery. Shockingly, within this recall group, residual tumour tissue is overlooked again in around 1,200 patients, requiring a third round of surgery. Surgical recall increases patient distress, increases the risk of complications, delays subsequent chemo- and radiotherapy, and it also costs an extra £22 million annually. Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (MKUH), in partnership with the OU, want to improve the accuracy of breast cancer surgery by using a fluorescent dye to pin-point tumour tissue during surgery.



*"You probably wouldn't expect a surgeon to be partially sighted. Yet that's effectively the current reality for breast cancer surgery. Although the main tumour is detectable by sight or touch the growing margins are practically invisible. By making the tumour cells brightly fluorescent we hope to allow surgeons to see the full extent of the tumour, dramatically improving the accuracy of the surgery and making surgical recall a thing of the past."*

Dr Jon Golding, Senior Lecturer in Health Sciences



The photograph above was taken at MKUH, showing the fluorescent cancerous breast tissue, some of which would not be visible to the surgeon under normal white light.

If surgeons could better identify the edges of the tumour during surgery, then recall would become unnecessary. Such a technique already exists for brain and bladder cancer surgery, using a fluorescent drug that selectively labels tumour tissue. The proposal from MKUH and the OU is to repurpose this drug for breast cancer surgery. The aim is to provide robust evidence that this fluorescence-guided surgery also works for breast cancer patients.

## Clinical pilot study

The pilot study will repurpose an already clinically-licensed drug called 5-aminolevulinic acid (known as ALA). ALA is administered orally before surgery and is selectively taken up and metabolised by cancer cells to temporarily give a bright purple fluorescent compound. The surgeon removes what they can see of the tumour under white light, as normal. However, towards the end of the surgery they switch over to fluorescent light allowing them to identify any outlying malignant tissue that may be near to but not part of the main tumour.

The hospital intends to run the trial with 10 breast cancer patients. Dr Jon Golding, Senior Lecturer in Health Sciences at the OU developed the study with surgical colleagues and will analyse the data.

If successful, this study could be a huge breakthrough in breast cancer surgery - demonstrating how surgeons can use fluorescence-guided surgery to detect and remove residual cancer cells.

Each year many women, their husbands, partners, family and friends are all touched by breast cancer – in fact, most people will probably know someone who has suffered. We hope that this study will help to reduce patient distress, reduce delays in subsequent treatment and most importantly the extra surgery – allowing these women to get on with their lives.



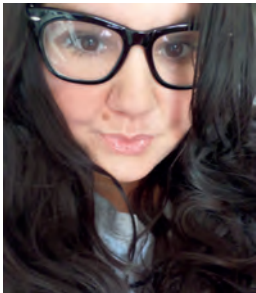
# The gift of education for generations to come

Together we can bring life-changing learning to many more

As The Open University has played a part in your life you know what a big difference it can make.

An OU education has changed hundreds of thousands of lives, giving individuals the chance to discover what they are capable of and enabling them to change their lives forever. With your support, we can extend this opportunity to many more, for years to come. Together we can bring life-changing learning to those who may have thought they would never have the chance to study.

Legacy gifts can help us support students like Danielle Haigh-Wood, who began studying with the OU following a friend's recommendation. She went on to complete her undergraduate degree in History and Philosophy whilst a full-time Carer for her grandfather who suffers with Parkinson's disease.



She says, *"I always had dreams of doing a degree, but my commitment to him wouldn't allow it. The OU impacted my life in ways I never thought possible. I could study while also having other responsibilities. I am still a full-time Carer, but a Carer with goals and a degree!"*

She was overwhelmed with the help that was available to carers and with the support she received from tutors. Danielle is now working towards an MA in History.

*"I have bequeathed a legacy to the OU because when I opted out of the extra year to do a BEd in the 1970s, and left teacher training college with a CERT Ed, I always said that it was okay and that I could do an OU degree at some later date!"*

*Ten years later I realised I was experienced but I wanted my qualifications to match the position I had achieved. It was hard work but well worth it!*

*I felt that the additional studying whilst working was incredibly demanding but it really made the theory relevant to my everyday experience in the classroom and in management. I did fund myself because I had a teaching job but I met people from many different contexts and backgrounds and I appreciated the extra stresses that imposed.*

*I would like others to have the same opportunity and, if they are unable to fund themselves, I would like to think my donation would have helped."*

Glynis Rumley BA MA(Ed)

## Understanding your intentions

If you have already included a legacy in your Will to the University, it would be wonderful to thank you for your generosity. If you are comfortable letting us know, we can confirm whether you would like to be remembered in the Legacy Garden (see over) and ensure that we write to you appropriately in the future.

## Next steps

We know that leaving a gift is not to be taken lightly and, if you feel it is right for you, we would love to talk with you about how a legacy can support the University and our students. Unrestricted gifts offer the most flexibility to respond to future developments, as these can be put to use wherever the need is greatest at the time. Alternatively, you may wish to leave a gift to a specific area of our work.

To find out more about how gifts in Wills can open up the future for OU students, visit [www.open.ac.uk/legacy](http://www.open.ac.uk/legacy) or simply phone us on 01908 659 141 or email [giving@open.ac.uk](mailto:giving@open.ac.uk)





# The Legacy Garden

*Society grows great when we plant trees in whose shade we shall never sit*  
From a Greek proverb featured in the Legacy Garden

The Open University created the Legacy Garden as a lasting visual testament of our gratitude to legacy donors.

Amongst the OU's research labs and offices is the walled garden, which originally provided flowers and fresh food for Walton Hall and has found a new life as our Legacy Garden.

The design and the planting were carefully planned to represent the ethos of the OU, the appreciation of our supporters and the diversity of our students and projects.

Each year we gather to remember the exceptional

generosity of our legacy donors and unveil memorial plaques which provide a lasting tribute.

If you would be interested in visiting the Milton Keynes campus, and the Legacy Garden, please call Ella Woodcock on 01908 659141 or email [ella.woodcock@open.ac.uk](mailto:ella.woodcock@open.ac.uk)

All enquiries are treated with the utmost sensitivity and in confidence. We fully understand that your priorities may change over time. If you choose to remain anonymous, we will respect your wishes – this in no way diminishes our gratitude for your support.

If you would like to give a gift to help **open up the future** to all learners, please fill in the donation form enclosed with your magazine, or give online by visiting **[giving.open.ac.uk](https://giving.open.ac.uk)**

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For general queries or to donate please contact:

**Emily Portch**  
**01908 655044**  
**[giving@open.ac.uk](mailto:giving@open.ac.uk)**



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