

Job Description

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Associate: 'Rethinking Natural Resources'
Division	Humanities
Department	Faculty of History
Location	Faculty of History, George Street, Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 7 1-3: £36,024- £38,205 per annum
Start date	01/06/2024 or as soon as possible thereafter
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed-term for 24 months or until 31/10/2026 whichever is sooner (limited by external funding)
Method of application	Electronic (see 'How to Apply' below)
Application deadline	Midday on Tuesday 12 th March 2024
Vacancy reference	170605

Research topic	Equitable Extraction and Social License
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Dr Venus Bivar/ Dr Amanda Power/ Professor David Pyle/ Dr Caitlin McElroy
Project Team	Oxford Martin School Programme: Rethinking Natural Resources
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by Oxford Martin School Programme: Rethinking Natural Resources.

Project Overview

<https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/rethinking-natural-resources/>

Climate change represents a profound existential challenge. The impact of anthropogenic CO2 emissions is well understood; the priority now is to mitigate the impacts by moving away from a fossil fuel-dependent global economy. Decarbonisation of our energy infrastructure is a crucial step, yet one that requires a reframing of our relationship to finding and extracting natural resources, and our strategies for minimising waste. Critical metals are essential for the



Net Zero energy transition. Meeting the anticipated demand in a secure and sustainable fashion is a challenge of global proportions - not only finding new metal deposits and developing methods for sustainable extraction, but also in rethinking the social-justice and environmental impacts of extractive industries. A business-as-usual approach runs the risk of simply perpetuating and exacerbating existing problems within the extractive industries. It is insufficient to enable a sustainable energy transition. Instead, we require a holistic, energy systems approach to the entire circular economy that interweaves scientific and engineering solutions with the need to evolve an economic, political, social and legal engagement framework that recognises **the past and present of complex human relationships with natural resources**.

‘Rethinking Natural Resources’ is a novel interdisciplinary programme that aims to develop an innovative approach to these problems through a case study of the Caribbean Island of Montserrat. Montserrat has been chosen because it is a location with geothermal energy potential and opportunities for co-recovery of raw materials and where such activities have the potential to be socioeconomically transformative if managed well. The programme brings together the perspectives and collaborative expertise of a team of researchers from Earth Sciences, Economics, the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Chemistry, History and Law.

The island of Montserrat has a limited history of industrial raw material extraction and no experience of geothermal power. The island’s small size and population make it an ideal demonstration project to look not just at geological and engineering aspects, but also at the wider economic context, regulatory framework and social license. We will also look at how lessons learned from the island’s broader history, including of legacies of slavery and catastrophic natural disasters, can inform best-practise strategies for the future. The project will be carried out in close collaboration with Montserrat’s community, government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Our findings can be applied to other sites worldwide where saline geofluids and other transformative industries offer novel approaches to renewable energy and natural resources. The experience developed by the project’s team of interdisciplinary researchers will benefit not only the energy and metals sector, but also inform future strategies for enabling the energy transition, including historically informed public consultation and engagement. We will build our study around the Natural Resources Charter, adapting it in the context of the green energy transition.

Key research questions for the project team

The Rethinking Natural Resources programme aims to explore new, unconventional sources of raw materials, devise new strategies for their recovery and implement new ways to ensure equitable access to communities where these resources occur. To do this requires an ambitious, multidisciplinary ‘what if’ approach. What if we could develop new ways to explore for the raw materials needed for the energy transition? What if these raw materials could be extracted from the ground without egregious surface impacts like open-pit mines and tailings dams? What if metals processing could be achieved with low carbon emissions? And what if the benefits of natural resources could be returned to countries that generate them in a fair and just way? The programme’s themes of Resources, Rights, Risks and Resilience cross-cut disciplines to address four key research questions:

1. **Optimising Exploration** How best to optimise detection and characterisation of metal-rich geothermal reservoirs? What are the environmental consequences and challenges of accessing them? (Resources, Risks)
2. **Metals Endowment and Recovery** What are the target metals? What state-of-the-art technologies exist for metals recovery? How can metals recovery impact the economics of geothermal energy? (Resources, Resilience)
3. **Economic and Regulatory Framework** What is the legal and policy framework regarding land rights and social license to operate? How best to develop opportunities for local economic benefit? How would resource extraction play into the local and regional geopolitical landscape? (Rights, Risks, Resilience)

4. Equitable Extraction and Social License What can we learn from the historical experience of resource extraction locally and regionally? How do we engage and inform communities about opportunities risks? How do we communicate the impacts of the energy transition? (Rights, Risks).

Each of these questions will be addressed by a postdoctoral researcher working as a member of the interdisciplinary team.

The Postdoctoral Research Associate in Equitable Extraction and Social License (4)

Montserrat has no established history of energy-relevant mineral extraction, although sand quarrying in the Belham Valley, established in the aftermath of the 1995 eruption, has become the island's largest employer. The island's history is inextricably linked to that of its volcanoes. Indigenous narratives of the Kalinago and Taino peoples around these features may persist in oral histories, folklore and origin stories; and may be physically represented in pre-colonial archaeological records. This possibility, and its cultural legacy, will be investigated by the Research Associate through access to archive material. To address questions around equity, extraction and social license we need to understand the imaginative landscape occupied by the volcano and its *soufrières*.

It is also crucial for corporate, industry, and political bodies to be informed and attentive to histories of harmful extraction and the social values that licensed them. What is acceptable in the pursuit of natural resources? The Research Associate will draw on experience of working with other communities in the Global South affected by more conventional mining. This will contribute to the programme's radical rethinking of conventional extractive practices and the corporate social responsibility. How can partnerships around resource extraction co-create resilient cultures that can think in complex, historically aware, locally meaningful, and informed ways about the transition from fossil fuel dependency to clean energy, and other aspects of climate change adaptation?

The programme will build on existing relationships with Montserrat's schools, communities and government to understand its diversity of needs and perspectives, the critical awareness of its young adults, and the memories and experience of its older people. Montserrat is not a pristine landscape, but is already a damaged, restless and unpredictable environment; now contemplating its own energy transition. In this sense, the needs of the community, and its longer-term, sustainable, justice-based future are highly specific. But at the same time, insights from Montserrat can provide a detailed and portable template for other communities and larger groups faced with culturally resilient transformations in the face of climate change.

The role

Responsibilities/duties

Reporting to and supported by a supervisory team of Dr Amanda Power, Professor David Pyle and Dr Caitlin McElroy, the post holder will be part of a highly interdisciplinary research network working independently to carry out research for the Oxford Martin School's Rethinking Natural Resources programme. They will be responsible for developing and bringing to the programme an understanding of Montserrat's history, particularly as it is salient for the contemporary population.

Their responsibilities will be to:

- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines
- Undertake archival, literature and field work to examine relevant aspects of Montserrat's history and from these prepare working theories and analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate

- Draw on and develop research methodologies on the impact of extractive industries on populations and environments in the Global South as a lens to examine the unique contemporary situation on Montserrat.
- Work with Montserrat's schools, communities and government to understand its diversity of needs and perspectives, the critical awareness of its young adults, and the memories and experience of its older people.
- Bring together these lines of research to assess how to build resilient cultures that can think in complex, historically aware, locally meaningful, and informed ways about the transition from fossil fuel dependency to clean energy, and other aspects of climate change adaptation. The aim is to establish what is needed for equitable, community-benefiting extraction and to create a broad-based social license.
- Lead and collaborate in the preparation of scientific reports and journal articles, present papers and posters and represent the research group at external meetings/seminars, either with others or alone.
- Participate in the programme's communications and outreach activities, either with others or alone.
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities, support some project management to coordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines. Undertaking supporting coordination roles across the project as needed will also be expected.
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on Montserrat's historical background, contemporary needs and ambitions across Montserrat's population, histories of harmful extraction and the social values that licensed them.
- Contribute ideas for new research projects including those for Masters students.
- There is scope for the PDRA to undertake some teaching in the History Faculty, either in taught courses or in the supervision of Masters projects.

Practical information

For an informal discussion about this opportunity from a History perspective, please contact Dr Venus Bivar, Associate Professor of Environmental History: venus.bivar@history.ox.ac.uk. For information on other aspects of the project, please contact Professor David Pyle in Earth Sciences: david.pyle@earth.ox.ac.uk. All practical and procedural queries should be sent to our recruitments team: recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk. All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence; they will not form part of the selection decision.

We expect to hold interviews in late March 2024.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out below. You should make sure that your application shows very clearly how your skills and experience meet these criteria. We are committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Chairs of selection committees will be aware of the principles of equality of opportunity and fair selection and there will be both female and male members of the selection committee. Selection committees will explicitly take into account any career breaks or other factors, such as part-time working or disability, which may have had an impact on the quantity of candidates' publications.

Essential

- Hold a relevant PhD/DPhil, or be close to completion, together with relevant research experience.
- Experience of research methodologies that explore community perspectives
- A track record of successful engagement with local communities
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities
- Evidence of research ability including publications and presentations at international conferences
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to work in a multi-disciplinary team of researchers across the physical sciences, social sciences and humanities
- Experience of developing networks of collaborators

Desirable

- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project
- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication, including with researchers in other disciplines
- Experience of working in the Caribbean or other regions of the Global South
- Expertise on one or more regions affected by extraction and/or its aftermath
- Experience with oral history methodologies and an understanding of oral history practice and ethics

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at:

<https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

The Faculty of History

The Faculty of History in Oxford is the largest in the United Kingdom and one of the largest in the world. It has a very strong international reputation for its scholarship and its teaching of undergraduate and graduate students, with particular strengths in the history of the British Isles, continental Europe, imperial and global history, the United States, economic and social history, intellectual history and the history of science, medicine and technology. Within the Faculty there is also a department for the History of Art and a number of dedicated research centres.

The Faculty of History provides a robust and supportive framework for research, including:

- Financial support for research travel, research assistance, and editorial help
- Mentoring, including discussion of research plans and progress
- Internal and interdisciplinary collaborations, through research centres
- Assistance in the formulation of research plans and funding bids

The Faculty enables all its postholders, including departmental lecturers, to request up to £800 per year for research expenses, and makes additional funds available for organising conferences in Oxford. In addition, to assist newly-

appointed postholders in the development and publication of their research, Faculty funds are available for early career and established colleagues to hold a workshop at which colleagues can discuss drafts of their next monograph.

The Faculty is located in the Old Boys' High School, George Street. This is a very central location, less than 10 minutes' walk from the rail station, and very close to bus station, shops and other University locations. The premises house a community of around 20 administrative staff and up to 30 other users, comprising doctoral students, researchers, and academics and professors. The building is also used for teaching and seminars.

More information about the Faculty can be found at: www.history.ox.ac.uk.

The Faculty holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

The Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion, as well as the Ruskin School of Art. The Division has more than 500 members of academic staff, approximately 4,100 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), 1,000 postgraduate research students and 720 students on postgraduate taught courses.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Libraries, with their 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to innovative agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study. Our faculties are among the largest in the world, enabling Oxford to offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.

For more information please visit: www.humanities.ox.ac.uk.

Partner departments:

The Department of Earth Sciences

<https://www.earth.ox.ac.uk/>

The Smith School of Enterprise

<https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/>

How to apply

Applications are made through our e-recruitment system and you will find all the information you need about how to apply on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. The statement may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents as **PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Help and support is available from: <https://hrsystems.admin.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support>

If you require any further assistance please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk.

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our e-recruitment system to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.

For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.