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Europaeum Oxford Research Bursary Report

I am a third year PhD candidate in the Department of International History at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies-Geneva, working under the supervision of Professor Balachandran. I received the support of the Europaeum Oxford-Geneva Study Bursary to conduct research on my thesis titled: *The Political Economy of Casual Labour: Work, Famine and Public Works in the North-Western Provinces of Colonial India, c.1840- 1914*.

The Europaeum Research Bursary allowed me to stay in Oxford for three weeks and conduct research in the libraries of University of Oxford. During this time, I was able to look at some private papers of famine administrators, some rare books, as well as make use of the abundance of published material. Certain documents are required to register for the Bodleian card, for which one also has to pay 20 pounds. This card allows access to only Group A libraries, that is, not all college libraries are open for users and would require permission or additional application.

I spent most of my time at the Weston Library, where I could order all offsite material in their reading rooms. There is no limit to how many documents one can order in a day, but a limit on how many they can store for you at a time. It is advisable to contact any library in advance if one wishes to look at special material. I also visited the Angus library of Regent's Park College for a historical pamphlet. All these libraries allowed me to pre-order material and the staff was very helpful. Bodleian libraries hold a vast repository of books. Oxford, Cambridge and British Library are among the four libraries that receive each book published in UK. I was able to read substantial secondary literature which otherwise is not readily available in Geneva.

In addition to personal research, I was also able to meet renowned professors in my field and discuss my work with them. This was also true for students, many of whom attend relevant seminars. Oxford has a vibrant seminar culture and many ongoing events, so for someone who is looking to gain knowledge outside the library, the University is the hub of all such dynamic activities. Of interest to me were the Economic and Social History Seminar and the Global History Seminars. The ideal time to visit Oxford would be during term time for the following reasons: to ensure that all professors are available; to be a part of ongoing seminars; and finally, to avoid peak tourist season when the city and the colleges can get very crowded.

Oxford is a beautiful place with many parks and museums. Due to lack of time, I did not have the time to explore the city in its entirety. However, I was able to visit the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Ashmolean, besides touring some of the colleges and parks around the centre of the city. The libraries have fascinating areas which one must visit; such as the Duke Humfrey's Library which is surrounded by rare books; or the Headley tea room for a quick and affordable coffee. The Weston library occasionally opens its terrace which has a beautiful view of Oxford on Fridays during Visiting Scholars' meeting times (also a good opportunity to meet other researchers over coffee).

The Europaeum office was extremely helpful in directing us to interesting places, advising us on travel and accommodation in Oxford, as well as forwarding us relevant information on seminars and events. Prospective candidates should note that the accommodation costs in Oxford can be quite high, so best to book in advance as University housing can be unreliable with its availability. All in all, I had a good experience during my stay, made convenient thanks to the guidance from Susanne and Tracey. I was able to complete part of my final archival research and write a paper for a conference presentation, in addition to notes relevant for my thesis chapters. I would like to thank the Europaeum office for making this trip possible.