

# Question Time

## Professor Claire Davis



### 1 What do you do?

I am Professor of Ferrous Metallurgy in the School of Metallurgy and Materials in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

### 2 What do you really do?

I research the properties of steels. This means that I look at understanding why they have the properties they do and how these can be optimised. The range of applications I work on is from rail and automotive steels to oil pipelines and aerospace steels.

### 3 How do you get to work?

I drive. I live in a relatively small village in Worcestershire where the public transport would take me in the wrong direction.

### 4 What's the best aspect of your job?

Learning new things. I enjoy working out answers to research questions.

### 5 What's the worst aspect of your job?

Paperwork, sometimes it feels as if there is a lot of it.

### 6 What would you like to be doing in five years' time?

I guess more of the same. I get a buzz out of the research work I am involved in so whatever I am doing I hope that is still a big part of the job.

### 7 What do you enjoy most about University life?

The fact that each day is different, whether it is answering student questions or working on a research problem, there is always something new.

### 8 How do you unwind?

In my garden. We have a large garden in the countryside and produce a lot of fruit and vegetables, so there is always something for me to be doing outside.

### 9 Which book is on your bedside table?

I am currently reading *Our Man in Havana* by Graham Greene as part of the book club I belong to.

### 10 What is your favourite tippie?

Definitely a cup of tea.

### 11 What makes a good night out?

Good company.

### 12 Which animal are you most like?

My husband says a cat because I like my sleep.

### 13 Describe your favourite holiday.

It used to be one where I would be hiking, canoeing or climbing somewhere new. Now we have a young child I guess it is more likely to be a quiet seaside off the beaten track.

### 14 What is your favourite sport?

Hockey, I used to play a lot.

### 15 Who are the top three people on your fantasy dinner party list?

Richard Feynman (the physicist), Charles Darwin and Stephen Fry.

### 16 If you were a superheroine, who would you be?

Asking a couple of friends they say Wonder Woman. I found this very difficult to answer.

### 17 What has been the highlight of your life to date?

One of the more memorable things was attending a reception at 10 Downing Street with Tony Blair. However, a personal highlight was the first time I went diving off the Great Barrier Reef.

### 18 If you could banish one thing from the world what would it be?

Ignorance.

### 19 Describe yourself in three words

Conscientious, impatient, positive.

### 20 What is your personal motto?

Do as you would be done by.

**Would you like to appear on Question Time?**

or know a colleague who would?

Contact: [university-buzz@bham.ac.uk](mailto:university-buzz@bham.ac.uk)

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and finally...



# Energy at Birmingham

January/February 2011



Optimistic outlook



Celebrating excellence



Question Time

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

## As I see it. An optimistic outlook



Lee Sanders, Registrar and Secretary

**'A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity, an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty'. 'Who said this?' you ask. Well read on...**

I am an optimist and in Higher Education we could do with a little more optimism right now. Like it or not, the vote on fees has gone through parliament and we must respond to the new environment. Don't get me wrong, I am not downplaying the challenges this will present. Students will be making a larger investment in their Higher Education and they and their families will expect more in return even if universities are not much better off financially when the funding from fees and the cuts in Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) grant are netted off. There are fine balances to be struck and judgments to be made, and plenty of uncertainty.

We need to reflect on the balance between widening access, financial aid, and increasing the quality of our entrants. As well as providing a high-quality education, we must enhance student employability. While institutions might make a reasoned guess, competition law means universities have to set their fee without knowing how much competitors will charge. We cannot be sure how student demand will react to the new regime, or what the knock-on effects will be for postgraduate study. We don't yet know all the rules of the game. For example, we await guidance on what we will be required to include in our new widening access agreement with the Office For Fair Access (OFFA), and the detailed impact on us of the cuts in HEFCE grant will probably not be available until March. What about league tables, reputational standing and the National Student Survey (NSS)? The pessimist's list might go on.

But at Birmingham, we have many reasons to be optimistic and more confident about the future. We are not being distracted or frozen by these difficulties and uncertainties. Instead, we have already established a task group led by the Vice-Chancellor to come up with a plan of action to respond to these challenges. Rather than see the issue simply in financial terms and obsessing about the fee level, the group is focusing on the value and distinctiveness of the Birmingham student experience, and what might make it even better. What would

be your priorities for improvement: increased contact hours and tutorial support; teaching enhancement; student employability support and more internships; perhaps improved student facilities such as the library, sport or learning spaces; what about student IT? We won't be able to afford every good idea and will have to make some hard choices, but by asking the question about enhancing our student experience we are reminded of one of the key reasons why we work in universities. In all of this, the task group is engaging closely with the Guild, who are being very helpful in considering these important issues.

There are other grounds for optimism. We are a hugely popular university, comfortably in the top 10 for undergraduate applications in the UK and the quality of our student intake is on the rise. We have many and varied academic strengths, in which we are investing. Our excellent widening participation work, notably our trail blazing Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme, puts us ahead of most of our rivals. The University is financially resilient. Our new strategic framework provides us with a compass in these uncertain times. We excel at sport, music and volunteering. Our alumni are generous and committed. Our beautiful campus is unrivalled and we offer a peerless residential experience amongst the Russell Group.

Our staff are a great source of optimism. Whether it is the excellent teaching, scholarship and research of academic colleagues, or the work of professional services across the University, the contribution and commitment of our staff to an excellent student experience is key. The Birmingham University Awards For Tremendous Achievement (BUAFTAs) this year have attracted over 900 nominations for professional services staff, who, in the view of their colleagues, have excelled and deserve recognition; many for their direct or indirect support for students. As another vignette, take my recent visit to the University's central kitchens, an impressive professional operation, where staff were beavering away preparing thousands of student meals for the Vale Christmas parties. Catering is an important but often overlooked window into the contributions our staff make to Birmingham student life.

**So, as 2011 dawns and universities face difficult times, I'd prefer to see the opportunities and, on this occasion, agree with Winston Churchill's words.**

Lee Sanders, Registrar and Secretary

## YOUR BUZZ

Next edition: 16 March 2011  
Copy deadline: 18 February noon

News, views, pictures, notices, adverts and events to:  
[university-buzz@bham.ac.uk](mailto:university-buzz@bham.ac.uk)

### Small ads

University members: £10 per 20 words  
Non-members: £20 per 20 words  
Payment in advance required. Cheques should be made out to the University of Birmingham and sent to Buzz, Marketing and Communications Team, Aston Webb Building, University of Birmingham, B15 2TT

### Your details

Please let us know if you want extra copies of Buzz or if you think we need to amend your distribution details.

### Buzz online

[www.buzz.bham.ac.uk](http://www.buzz.bham.ac.uk)

Views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the University or a statement of University policy. The publication of advertisements does not imply any endorsement by the University of the goods or services advertised. All submissions may be subject to editing. The Editor's decision is final.

Edited by Kate Pritchard

Cover shot: Dr Paul Norman, School of Physics and Astronomy, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. See pages 12-13.



Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP with Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood

## Raising the good city Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP gives 2010 Priestley Lecture

During November the School of Education, College of Social Sciences welcomed the Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP who gave a speech entitled *raising the good city: communitarian politics and education reform* for the 2010 Priestley Lecture. Liam spoke about his vision for improving our local communities.

The Priestley Lecture is an opportunity for an invited external speaker to give their own perspective and insight on the broad

subject matter of education. The School has been hosting the Priestley Lecture for many years in honour of Sir Raymond Priestley, a former Vice Chancellor of the University.

They have also launched a brochure celebrating educational success and you can download this from their website [http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/documents/Celebrating\\_success.pdf](http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/documents/Celebrating_success.pdf)

## Staff achievements

**Professor Daniela Kuhn, School of Mathematics, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

**Appointed Professor and Mason Chair.** The School of Mathematics has appointed the first female Professor to the prestigious Mason Chair position. The Mason Chair in Mathematics is one of the four foundation chairs of the university, first established in 1880.

**Jennifer Norton, School of Chemical Engineering, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

**Winner of The Food and Drink Processing IChemE Award** for her work on the development of cocoa butter emulsions for fat and calorie reduction in chocolate. Jennifer is the first person from the University to win an IChemE award.

**Learn more** about these achievements

[www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/buzz/achievements.shtml](http://www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/buzz/achievements.shtml) Want to highlight an achievement here? Contact [university-buzz@bham.ac.uk](mailto:university-buzz@bham.ac.uk)

## BUAFTA 2011 finalists

The finalists for the 2011 BUAFTAs have now been selected and the winners will be announced at the gala dinner on 4 February 2011. Don't forget to buy your BUAFTA raffle tickets, each ticket costs £1 and all proceeds go to the Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. You can buy from your local BUAFTA champion and there are some great prizes on offer including:

- 1st prize – two week holiday in Turkey
- 2nd prize – HP mini 5103 notebook
- 3rd prize – Blackberry

### Learn more

Teenage Cancer Trust Unit  
[www.teenagecancertrust.org/what-we-do/specialist-services/units/queen-elizabeth-hospital-young-adult-unit/](http://www.teenagecancertrust.org/what-we-do/specialist-services/units/queen-elizabeth-hospital-young-adult-unit/)  
View the shortlist and find your BUAFTA champion  
[www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/buafta](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/buafta)



## Honorary Doctorates for Apprentice star and top athlete

Alan Sugar's right-hand woman, Karren Brady was given an honorary degree at the December graduation ceremonies. Also receiving their honours was Ironman World Record holder, Chrissie Wellington and key figures from the voluntary, education and health sectors; Jane Slowey, Professor Dato' Dr Hassan Said and Paul Sabapathy.

### A live first for degree congregations

Degree congregations were broadcast live on the new University website for the first time during December 2010. Over 4,700 visitors from 85 countries came online to share in the celebrations.

# Sharing experiences at *Table for Ten*

Alumni, students and staff gathered together for Table for Ten, an informal dinner to share experiences and talk about careers and employability as a new graduate.

At the 12 tables were representatives from Colleges and Corporate Services, along with the Access to Birmingham and HoneyPot schemes, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Birmingham Business School and Birmingham. For life.

Alumni were able to offer practical advice on the transition from university to workplace to current students and enjoyed hearing about life at Birmingham today. David Smith (2009 Executive MBA) commented that it was a 'great opportunity to give something back'

to current students.

Practical feedback on developing career provision for students and how key skills could be built into academic courses were of interest to academic and careers staff. Dr Michael Gammage, MBChB Programme Director, said that he had gained 'valuable ideas from alumni and students on course changes'.

Following the event, a number of alumni have offered their time to volunteer as mentors and students have already followed up on contacts made on the evening and offers of work experience.

If you are interested in attending a future Table for Ten event or have an idea for a theme contact [alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk).



The MSc Marketing table

## The Honey Pot award Supporting student work experience

The Honey Pot award enables students to receive up to £800 to support unpaid or very low paid work experience over the summer and is available to any undergraduate student who is not in their final year. It recognises and supports students who are undertaking personal and professionally challenging work experience. The awards are competitive and students will need to clearly show initiative in sourcing a work placement as well as demonstrating how it will challenge them personally and link to

their future career path.

There are three strands; the Global Honey Pot for students undertaking work overseas, UK Professional Honey Pot for those working in particular professions and Researcher Honey Pot for students considering a career in research. If you work with students please encourage them to apply before the 18 February deadline.

Learn more [www.honeypot.bham.ac.uk](http://www.honeypot.bham.ac.uk) or [honeypot@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:honeypot@contacts.bham.ac.uk).



L-R: Ann Evans, Robin Miller, Ross Millar, David Stephenson, Robbie Roberts, Jade Bressington and Kerry Allen.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### London Marathon beckons for Jade

College of Social Sciences staff put their best foot forward at the Birmingham Half-Marathon in October but for one of the team this was a mere warm up in preparation for the London Marathon, in April. Jade Bressington is running to raise money for Acorns Children's Hospice Trust. **Learn more** or to sponsor [www.justgiving.com/bressingtonsrn4acorns](http://www.justgiving.com/bressingtonsrn4acorns)

### Carol Service charitable contribution

The University Carol Service on Monday 13 December raised £1,120.23 in aid of local charity Restore, a project of the ecumenical umbrella group Birmingham Churches Together. Restore welcomes and supports refugees and those seeking sanctuary from persecution, torture and trauma through a range of social activities. **Learn more** [www.birminghamchurches.org.uk](http://www.birminghamchurches.org.uk)

### Thank you for wearing your poppy with pride

Over £1765 was raised by the University for The Poppy Appeal in November 2010.

### Catering get into the Children in Need spirit

Catering Operations across campus got dressed up to raise money on Friday 19 November, on behalf of Children in Need. The team would like to say thank you to all staff and students who contributed, raising £559.22 in total.



Heidi Stephens, Barbara Slafford, Julia Jackson, Ashley Smith and Eleanor Cooke, the team at iLounge, Main Library.



Some of the winners with Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood

# Celebrating excellence

These awards are designed to recognise and publicly thank those individuals or teams who, in the view of their Schools and Colleges, have contributed the most to the positive learning experience of students in the last academic year.

Individuals or teams were nominated by each School for their commitment and exceptional contribution. From these school winners, each College was then able to choose their 'best of the best'. Eligible staff included those who teach as well as the learning support staff who work behind the scenes.

### Award winners

#### College of Arts and Law

##### College award:

- Dr Elena Theodorakopoulos, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity

##### School awards:

- Graham Gee, Birmingham Law School
- Danielle Fuller, School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies
- Reg Cline-Cole, Elaine Fulton, William Purkis, Margaret Small, Lynne Brydon, Justina Dugbazah, School of History and Cultures
- Dr Elena Theodorakopoulos, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity
- Marjolijn Storm, School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music
- Stephen Pattison, School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion

#### College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

##### College award:

- Andrew Quinn, School of Civil Engineering

##### School awards:

- Dr Natalie Rowley, School of Chemistry
- Andrew Quinn, School of Civil Engineering
- Dr Nick Blundell, School of Computer Science
- Martin Russell, School of Electronic, Electrical and Computing Engineering
- Dr Jonathan Bennett, School of Mathematics
- Barry Weston, School of Physics and Astronomy

#### College of Life and Environmental Sciences

##### College award:

- Dr Jacqueline Blissett, School of Psychology

##### School awards:

- Jonathan Ride, School of Biosciences
- Alexander Milner and Megan Klaar, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Dr Jacqueline Blissett, School of Psychology
- Iain Moir, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences

A celebratory dinner and award ceremony, hosted by the Vice-Chancellor, was held during October for the 2010 winners of the **Awards for Excellence in Teaching or Supporting Students' Learning**.

#### College of Medical and Dental Sciences

##### College award:

- Dr Lisa Jones, School of Health and Population Sciences

##### School awards:

- Dr Martyn Chidgey, School of Cancer Sciences
- Dr Lisa Jones, School of Clinical and Experimental Medicine
- Mr Upen Patel, School of Dentistry
- Dr Kate Thomas, School of Health and Population Sciences
- Dr Joanne Wilton, School of Immunity and Infection

#### College of Social Sciences

##### College award:

- The Department of Economics, Birmingham Business School

##### School awards:

- The Department of Economics, Birmingham Business School
- Paulina Ramirez, Birmingham Business School
- Magdalena Kubanyiova, School of Education
- Cerwyn Moore, Laura Shepherd and Dan Whisker, School of Government and Society
- Joy Fillingham, Jo Ellins and Shirley McIver, School of Social Policy

## New play encourages local children to be creative in science and engineering

The School of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering (EECE) is turning its hand to the arts after producing an interactive play which explores the impact of science and engineering on everyday life, society and individuals.

'Magnets, Ducks and Superconductors' was devised to engage Year 9 pupils throughout the West Midlands. It encourages consideration of creativity, interpersonal relationships and ethics through science and engineering in line with the National Curriculum.

The performances delivered by Gazebo, professional theatre in education company, presents the issues through the lives of

Maggie, a scientist, and her teenage daughter Jess.

The first eight week series of the play in December saw over 70 performances to more than 2,000 pupils throughout the West Midlands. Bookings are already being taken for a second run which is planned for the summer term of 2011.

Magnets, Ducks and Superconductors is sponsored by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council under the Partnerships in Public Engagement Programme.

**Learn more**  
[www.mdsproject.bham.ac.uk](http://www.mdsproject.bham.ac.uk)

## A year of progress at the Oaks and Elms nurseries

The past year at the University's two day care nurseries has been a period of change with both locations having major improvements to modernise and expand the facilities and to enhance the learning, play and social environments. This has included the creation of a new pre-school unit at the Oaks Day Nursery accommodating 38 children aged 3–5 years.

Both nurseries embarked on a process of applying for a Government led, capital funding grant and were successful in obtaining nearly £198,000. Outdoor areas will be enhanced with new play equipment and a 'Forest School' initiative is taking place at both nurseries. This is an innovative, educational approach to encourage and inspire children through

positive outdoor experiences, using a woodland environment as a classroom and as a learning space for interactive play, health, recreation, social and personal development. By participating children have the opportunity to develop intrinsic motivation, sound emotional and social skills, and these, through self-awareness, can be developed to reach personal potential and increase self-confidence and self-esteem.

The nurseries are registered with OFSTED and received a good grading with outstanding elements. Both deliver quality, flexible, childcare for children aged six weeks to five years.

Staff are entitled to a 6% discount and three and four year-olds may also be entitled to Nursery Education Funding.

### Opening hours

Monday–Friday, 7.55am–6.20pm  
Attendance can be full time or am/pm  
Refreshments are provided  
Learn more

[www.has.bham.ac.uk/childcare](http://www.has.bham.ac.uk/childcare)

### Contact

■ Michelle Bates, Nursery Manager,  
The Oaks, 0121 414 7999  
■ Selina Hunt, Nursery Manager,  
The Elms, 0121 414 8118



### Happiness Lecture

**Tuesday 12 July**

This year's Baggs Memorial Lecture on the theme of Happiness will be delivered by Alastair Campbell. This event will also offer an opportunity for book signing. Keep up-to-date at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/events/calendar.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/events/calendar.aspx) and future editions of Buzz.

### Academic and librarian collaborate on study skills book

Jonathan Grix, POLSIS, College of Social Sciences and Gerald Watkins, Library Services have pooled their years of experience to produce a handy sized book with all the advice a student needs on finding and using the best information resources.

Information skills: finding and using the right resources has been published as part of the Palgrave Macmillan Study Skills series and has advice on basic research skills, compiling a literature review, finding and evaluating academic resources, guidance on referencing, avoiding plagiarism, the basics of netiquette and a handy glossary.

The book complements Academic Skills for Social Scientists; a WebCT repository of useful advice on a broad range of academic skills produced by the same authors.

**Learn more**  
[www.weblearn.bham.ac.uk](http://www.weblearn.bham.ac.uk)



Part of the new research space

### New space for research and study

Academic staff and researchers now have a study area within the Main Library specifically reserved for their use. The space comprises three rooms, the largest of which provides study spaces, including some bigger than average desks. The two smaller rooms contain a relaxed seating area and a small computer cluster. There is wireless access throughout. The entrance is on the third floor (front of the building) and the facility is available during normal Library opening hours.

### Step change for Barber Library

New ladders at the Barber Fine Art Library are making life easier for library users and staff. The new ladders complement the period interior of the library, which dates back to the original 1930s. Caroline Moore, Library Services Facilities Manager, worked with supplier Gresswells to source the bespoke ladders, which were jointly funded by Library Services and the Henry Barber Trustees.

Helen Barrell, Library Services Assistant Manager (on the new ladders) with Caroline Moore



## Developments in Library facilities and services



### Improved iLounge

The Main Library iLounge has been refurbished to provide a café facility and relaxed study space, including two group study rooms. Enjoy a range of hot and cold drinks and snacks throughout the week, including Saturday and Sunday. Learn more and view opening hours [www.library.bham.ac.uk](http://www.library.bham.ac.uk)

### Alumnus helps grow library collection

The History of Medicine Unit and Library Services have received a donation of around 1,700 books from alumnus Professor Christopher Lawrence. The books reflect the important work in history of medicine that Professor Lawrence has carried out over several decades at the History of Medicine Unit at UCL and, as such, are a unique collection of material.

Dr Jonathan Reinartz, Director of the History of Medicine Unit, and Nancy Graham of Library Services, who together have organised the collecting and hosting of the donation, have now reviewed the collection to ensure that each book will be placed in the most appropriate location.

Reflecting on the donation, Jonathan suggests it will have broad appeal. Professor Lawrence's broad interests and wide reading have benefited us with a donation that simultaneously fills numerous gaps in a diverse range of areas of current interests at Birmingham, including the histories of science, technology and medicine, while potentially stimulating further research in modern medical specialties, including the history of surgery, neurology and cardiology.

To acknowledge Professor Lawrence's contribution, all the books will receive a bookplate indicating the donation and a special note will be added to each book's entry on the online catalogue.

### Developing learning

The University has recently been awarded funding for a project titled DELILA (Developing Educators Learning and Information Literacies for Accreditation). The project is funded by JISC and HEA and will bring together learning technologists, library staff and educational developers to adapt and make available a range of digital and information literacy teaching materials. The project is a partnership with the London School Economics and a group of specialist UK librarians and the materials will be deposited in both UBIRA (the University's own online facility) and a national repository. Learn more <http://delliaopen.wordpress.com> or Ann-Marie James [a.m.james@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.james@bham.ac.uk).



The first visitor group with (L–R) Geoff Gilbert (Head of Academic Liaison and Collection Development), Diane Job (Director of Library Services) and Elizabeth Warner-Davies (Head of Library Customer Support)

### Maltese visitors learn from Library Services

Library Services is hosting a rolling series of secondments for staff at the University of Malta throughout 2010–11. Amongst other activities, they have participated in an IT training session for students, shadowed staff on the information desk and the online Just Ask team and gained hands-on experience of the eTheses system. Their wish to come and see what services are on offer demonstrates the wide range of activity taking place across Library Services.

## Support staff Performance and Development Review (PDR) update

During summer and autumn 2010 a group met to review the support staff PDR scheme following its first three years of operation. The PDR scheme is an annual review where each member of support staff has the opportunity to discuss their role, training and development needs and wider career aspirations with their manager or other appropriate reviewer.

### The group met to consider:

- Whether the scheme remains fit for purpose
- Whether it is delivering the results which were expected
- To make any appropriate recommendations for adjustments to the scheme

The review group considered a wide range of information and views on the scheme based on its operation across the University.

### You said, we did

In Have Your Say; the 2009 staff survey 92% of support staff responded positively to the statement 'I understand how my work contributes to the objectives of my immediate work area' and 89% responded positively to the statement 'I have a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of my immediate work area' Whilst these positive scores may be related in part to the PDR scheme when asked directly about it:

- 39% of participants found it useful
- 26% were neutral about it
- 36% did not find it useful

An important task for the review group therefore was to understand why a large number of support staff were either neutral or did not feel the scheme was useful for them and make recommendations for improvements where appropriate.

'Unison had three main objectives to incorporate into the revised PDR scheme; to increase the numbers of grade 100 and 200 staff that received awards, to tie the PDR process more closely to job descriptions, and to dispel the widely held belief that you had to take on extra work outside your job description in order to receive an award. I hope that the changes made under the

### Findings and recommendations

Overall the conclusion of the review group was that the scheme is fit for purpose but they made a number of recommendations:

- **Clarify the purpose and operation of the scheme**  
The scheme now emphasises the individual's job description as the starting point for a discussion about the development that is needed to keep pace with the job as it changes and how the individual's wider career aspirations can be supported.
- **Simplify the documentation**  
The documentation has now been simplified to help those who have to complete it. The complexity of the ratings of generic support staff capabilities has been removed, reducing ratings from 18 to six.
- **Ensure consistency of use across the University**  
One example of inconsistency of use discovered by the review group was where it was understood that to receive an extra increment under the scheme the individual had to be carrying out tasks that were not part of his/her job description. This is not the case and so the scheme now makes it clear.
- **Clarify roles of participants**  
The revised scheme now emphasises the role of the local co-ordinators in managing the scheme on behalf of their

revised scheme will result in a clearer and more defined process for reviewees. Unison will be monitoring the results of the revised scheme and hope to see a marked increase in the numbers of lower graded support staff awarded increments and one off payments.'

Howard Mower, Unison representative  
School of Education

The review group consisted of a reviewee, a reviewer, an Operations Manager, a College Director of Operations, a Director of a Corporate Service area, unions and HR representatives.

budget centre, acting as a link between the management of the budget centre and the reviewers and reviewees.

### ■ Ensure appropriate selection of reviewers

The success of the scheme depends upon the reviewer and the reviewee being able to engage with each other in helping to achieve the University's objectives and the individual's aspirations. It is important that the reviewer has the skills to draw out and encourage the reviewee so co-ordinators are encouraged to select reviewees who have appropriate personal skills, reinforced through adequate training.

This revised scheme will be in place for PDRs taking place in spring/summer 2011 and will be monitored annually and formally reviewed in 2013.

### Learn more

[www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/hr/payandreward/pdr.shtml/](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/hr/payandreward/pdr.shtml/) or discuss with your line manager.



# Buzz goes social

In the December issue of Buzz we told you about changes to our schedule for 2011 and that the magazine will now be issued six times per year. We also hinted at some exciting online news and can now announce that Buzz has gone social.

You will now be able to pick up Buzz news, events and information on Twitter, Facebook and Flickr!



### Buzz editorial dates 2011

- **16 March** – copy deadline 18 February
- **19 May** – copy deadline 22 April
- **20 July** – copy deadline 24 June
- **21 September** – copy deadline 26 August
- **23 November** – copy deadline 28 October

**Note:** Buzz will now be published six times a year rather than 10. Infocus will still be issued every month

### Small ads online payment

We will be launching online payments for Buzz small advertisements. More information will be available online and in the March issue of Buzz.

### Have something for Buzz?

Contact [university-buzz@bham.ac.uk](mailto:university-buzz@bham.ac.uk) to discuss.

### Run a staff club or society?

Did you know you can advertise in Buzz for free? Small adverts in the magazine are normally paid for but for a staff club or society there is no charge and this includes listing on [www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/useful/internal.shtml](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/useful/internal.shtml) and promotion through our social media channels.

## Why is Buzz bothering with social media?

### Hear it first online

Taking some of the Buzz content online means we can get news, events and information and events to our readers much quicker than in a bi-monthly publication. Buzz magazine will still contain a selection of news and events but we will use the social media channels to communicate more frequently. You'll likely hear it first online.

### More room, less disappointment

As Buzz is so popular on campus we get more requests to include information than we can fulfill therefore having these additional channels will help us minimise disappointing colleagues who take the time and trouble to let us know of interesting activities and events taking place.

### Missed the date?

Unfortunately sometimes colleagues miss the Buzz copy deadline date. Having additional channels to help promote news or events as they are received will help with promotion across the campuses.

### Isn't social media popular?

Social media is of course very popular across the globe and our staff are no different. It gives those colleagues who

prefer to get their news online the chance to do so. Of course we're sure there are many of you who will still enjoy picking up the printed copy of Buzz.

### Talk to us

Importantly it also gives you more chance to contribute and have your say on Buzz stories. Read an article and feel inspired? Then you can tweet or comment and Buzz will be happy to get in touch.

### Isn't social media accessible by all?

Yes, and Buzz Twitter, Facebook and Flickr pages will not be restricted although it is likely that the majority of followers will be staff or students at the University as Buzz and its content is focused on an internal audience. The magazine is currently published on [www.buzz.bham.ac.uk](http://www.buzz.bham.ac.uk) a public webpage. Any content that is not for public consumption will be linked to on a secure intranet page at [www.intranet.bham.ac.uk](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk) which requires a University login to access. With Twitter and Flickr you don't need to register with the websites to view so if you're not tweeting or flickr'ing yet you don't have to miss out on seeing the online content.

Switch on now and...

twitter

Follow us on Twitter  
<http://twitter.com/buzzunibham>

facebook

Find us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/buzzunibham](http://www.facebook.com/buzzunibham)

flickr™

Browse our Buzz images  
[www.flickr.com/photos/buzzunibham](http://www.flickr.com/photos/buzzunibham)

# 2010: THE YEAR IN STORIES

Over the last year there have been a number of stories in the media which have helped to demonstrate the breadth of work at Birmingham and enhance the University's reputation. None of this would have been possible without the hard work and enthusiasm of academics and staff across the University and the Communications team who helped to generate coverage with an Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) of more than £30 million. Here are some of the highlights of 2010.

Learn more about each story by visiting [www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/index.aspx) and using the search keywords shown below.

February

## The science of shootouts

**Dr Andrew Welchman, School of Psychology, College of Life and Environmental Sciences**  
Research inspired by cowboy movies involving 'laboratory gunfights' to show we move faster when we react to something in our environment than we do when we initiate the action ourselves.

- **Featured in:** Across national media and print value coverage amounted to over £240,000.
- **Search for:** Welchman

## A new future for social care

**Professor Jon Glasby, Health Services Management Centre, College of Social Sciences**  
Research into the social and financial gains that could be reaped from a radical overhaul of the adult social care system. The report was produced for the Department of Health and mentioned by previous Prime Minister Gordon Brown during a press conference.

- **Featured in:** National media.
- **Search for:** Glasby

March

## THE COST OF MULTIPLE BIRTHS

**Professor Steve McKay, School of Social Policy, College of Social Sciences**

A study into families with multiple births and their living standards supported by the Twin and Multiple Births Association.

- **Featured in:** National media and The Times of India.
- **Search for:** McKay

April

## The Commons comes to campus

**University staff and students**

The University hosted the final televised Prime Ministerial Debate, broadcast by the BBC on Thursday 29 April. It gave the opportunity to place academic staff, professional services staff and students in the media as commentators.

The debate coverage on the BBC reached more than 115 million people and there was over 48 hours of continuous live broadcasting on campus from Wednesday 28 April.

- **Featured in:** International media, a total of 1,944 articles and broadcasts mentioned the University with an estimated total value of nearly £4 million and potential audience reach of nearly 400 million.
- **Search for:** Leader debate

July

## UNEARTHING A NEW HENGE

**Professor Vince Gaffney, Dr Henry Chapman, Eamon Baldwin, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, College of Arts and Law**

An archaeology team from the University and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology in Austria discovered a major ceremonial monument less than one kilometre away from Stonehenge.

- **Featured in:** International media, a total of 476 print articles with a value of over £800,000 and a potential audience reach of over 46 million.
- **Search for:** Stonehenge



The three party leaders take to the stage in the Great Hall



Archaeologists at work on site at Stonehenge

September

## British Science Festival comes to town

**Leading University academics and Communications Team, External Relations, Corporate Services**

The team worked closely with the British Science Festival press office and University academics to maximise the opportunities presented with having science and health correspondents in the city. The University had two of the top five stories at the festival which had national and regional coverage. The following three stories were the highlights of Birmingham coverage.

### Mysteries of the universe

**Professor Alberto Vecchio and Dr Andreas Freise School of Physics and Astronomy, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

The hunt for gravitational waves, the existence of which was predicted by Einstein, is accelerating as Birmingham physicists start their upgrade of the LIGO gravitational wave detectors in Washington and Louisiana and celebrate the possible NASA/ESA mission in 2020 to put a detector into space.

- **Featured in:** National media.
- **Search for:** Vecchio

### Dampening down inflammation

**Dr Karim Raza, School of Immunity and Infection, College of Medical and Dental Sciences**

Rheumatologists at the University have identified a window in the progression of rheumatoid arthritis when the disease could be more effectively controlled and even 'switched off'.

- **Featured in:** National and regional media.
- **Search for:** Raza

### Prozac home to end pain of PMS

**Dr Thelma Lovick, School of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, College of Medical and Dental Sciences**

Neuroscientists at the University are developing a new treatment for premenstrual syndrome (PMS) after identifying, for the first time, an organic cause for the condition. Low doses of the commonly prescribed anti-anxiety drug fluoxetine (Prozac) could be used to prevent PMS.

- **Featured in:** Page lead in every national newspaper and local and regional media.
- **Search for:** Lovick

Learn more [www.birmingham.ac.uk/](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/)

- [news/latest/index.aspx](http://news/latest/index.aspx) for University news
- [latest/index.aspx](http://latest/index.aspx) for University events
- [news/thebirminghambrief/index.aspx](http://news/thebirminghambrief/index.aspx) to read the Birmingham Brief – intelligent thought on policy issues
- [news/contacts/index.aspx](http://news/contacts/index.aspx) to contact the Communications team

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Andreas Freise and Alberto Vecchio at the University's 'To Boldly Go' exhibit in the city centre

October

## THE BROWNE REVIEW REVEALED

**Professor David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor, staff and students**

The BBC chose the University as one of the key outside broadcast locations for its coverage of the announcement of the Browne Review. The Vice-Chancellor who was a member of the Browne Review team commented on the impact of the Browne Review including a piece in the Times Higher Education on 11 November and staff and students had a voice on the future of Higher Education.

- **Featured in:** National media including a print media coverage value of £300,000.
- **Search for:** Browne

November

## Mini big bangs

### Early universe was a liquid

**Dr David Evans, School of Physics and Astronomy, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

November saw two major stories as a result of work at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research). The first was around an experiment which studied the result of accelerating and smashing together lead nuclei to recreate the fundamental particles that existed in the first few microseconds after the big bang. In the second, an experiment discovered that the very early universe was not only very hot and dense but behaved like hot liquid.

- **Featured in:** National and regional coverage including front page of the Metro and Sunday Telegraph. David Evans was interviewed on broadcast media including BBC Radio 4 and BBC Midlands Today and was named in December's GQ magazine in the list of Britain's top 100 most influential men.
- **Search for:** CERN



Dr David Evans at CERN

# At the forefront of nuclear education and research

## Key area of investment

As announced in issue 120 (January/February 2010) of Buzz, Birmingham's Centre for Nuclear Education and Research represents a key significant investment for the university. Find out more about the investment areas here: [www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/news/investment.shtml](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/news/investment.shtml)

## A Rich Heritage

When the University invested in Nuclear Research in 1937, they could not have imagined the impact that nuclear technology would have. The technological challenges are ever changing; from dealing with plant waste and decommissioning, extending the lives of existing stations, to experimental fusion research, Birmingham is contributing to the international scene, by researching solutions and educating those who will enact them. The UK has committed to a major 'new build' programme involving approximately ten new nuclear power stations. This requires a major reinvestment in applied nuclear research and also in nuclear courses, challenges which Birmingham has risen to.

Professor Martin Freer, Director of the Birmingham Centre for Nuclear Education and Research and head of the Nuclear Physics Research Group, was recently awarded the Rutherford Medal and Prize for distinguished research in nuclear physics. Professor Freer believes 'The UK faces a major challenge over coming decades involving the production of electrical energy whilst meeting the challenging target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80% of 1990 levels. It is widely recognised that UK investment

With new collaborations underway, one of the largest cohorts of students ever and two new courses opening this autumn, Birmingham's Centre for Nuclear Education and Research (CNER) is at its strongest. Drawing expertise across nine schools and three colleges, with diverse and comprehensive research Birmingham is making a substantial impact in this sector.

in new nuclear power stations is part of the solution. Birmingham aims to provide the trained graduates and nuclear research expertise to ensure this national investment succeeds.'

## Energy at Birmingham

The CNER is a cornerstone of the recently launched Energy at Birmingham initiative, which spans the Colleges to bring together the best minds in Birmingham and from overseas to tackle the big challenges we face in energy. Spearheaded by Professor Nigel Weatherill, Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, the initiative aims to support Birmingham's wealth of energy research and teaching into the future.

## Learn more

Brigid Jones, [b.jones.4@bham.ac.uk](mailto:b.jones.4@bham.ac.uk).

## Educating the Sector

Since 1956, the year the world's first Nuclear Power station opened at Calder Hall, over 650 students have graduated from the University's MSc, The Physics and Technology of Nuclear Reactors into the

industry, the last five years seeing the most students in its history. So respected is the course that an industrial steering panel, composed of almost 20 companies from the sector, provides financial support for the course, advises on content and provides opportunities for graduates to undertake projects. Two thirds of graduates have job offers before completing, and alumni hold key positions within the industry; one currently holds the position of Head of Unit for Nuclear Fission and Radiation Protection for the European Commission. The course is interdisciplinary, as is the nature of nuclear research at Birmingham, as Dr Paul Norman, leader of the course, explains: 'The nuclear initiative at Birmingham is a great example of the knowledge needed to understand issues relating to nuclear power it isn't just nuclear physics and engineering that are required – it's metallurgy for reactor materials, radio chemistry, geology for waste repositories, bio and medical sciences for health effects, computer science and robotics to handle spent fuel, socio political aspects, nuclear economics, and environmental issues. There are not many areas of the university this does not touch upon, and many people can make a

contribution and get involved.'

Birmingham is now expanding its educational offering, and September 2011 will see the new undergraduate programme in Nuclear Engineering. The course is pioneering in drawing in different disciplines to meet a specific goal. Also in development is an MSc in Radioactive Waste Management and Decommissioning, equipping scientists to cope with the growing number of former power stations and radioactive waste that we produce.

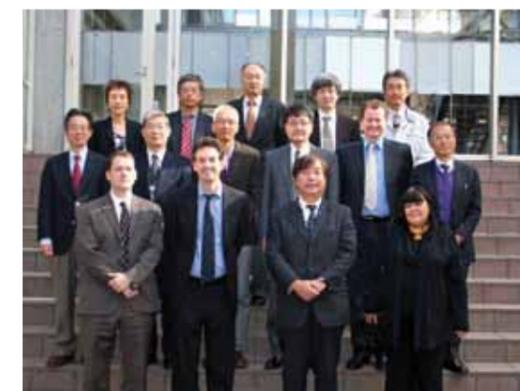
## Research

In addition, Birmingham is embarking on an investment programme to bolster its research programmes. These include projects in power station materials, nuclear chemistry, geological and hydrological characterisation for legacy waste disposal, and development of biomolecular systems for harvesting nuclear isotopes and sensor development. The investments cover new academic appointments and an enhancement of research infrastructure. Dr Brian Connolly, leader of the new undergraduate course, is pioneering work into materials for a new generation of nuclear reactors. 'The future of nuclear energy lies beyond the current generation of light water reactors. Future reactors will

be expected to provide additional improvements in safety and reliability, use uranium resources more efficiently, and provide lower volumes of toxic waste. Several advanced reactor concepts are under development but each pose considerable challenges to current materials technology. My research focuses on solving these materials challenges that will determine the feasibility of these advanced concepts and define the long-term future of nuclear power.' A key feature will be the development of national and international collaborations. Birmingham has established links with laboratories in the US and recently visited the Japanese Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) to develop research links with leading groups in Japan. Birmingham academics had good reason to be a little daunted by their tour of an experimental fusion reactor; operating at 220,000,000K, it has broken the world record for the highest temperature ever created by man.

With a rich heritage behind, a wealth of current talent and a strong investment in the future, Birmingham is set to remain at the forefront of Nuclear education and research for much time to come.

Learn more [www.nuclear.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml](http://www.nuclear.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml)



Dr Brian Connolly, Professor Martin Freer, Dr David Boardman and Professor Lyn McKaskie visiting JAEA in Japan

## Birmingham Nuclear Facts

- The Physics and Technology of Nuclear Reactors MSc is the UK's longest running Nuclear Engineering course
- In recent years, two thirds of students have had offers from the nuclear industry before even finishing their studies
- Although the course has existed for 54 years, a total of only four people have led it in that time
- Three winners of the Rutherford Medal have come from Birmingham: Mark Oliphant (1946), Rudolf Peierls (1952), Martin Freer (2010)
- Birmingham's Professor John Knott was awarded an OBE for services to nuclear safety (2004)
- Birmingham has nuclear expertise in nine schools across three colleges



# Look out for Have your say 2011

## Survey live: 7–31 March 2011

In March 2011 the University will hold its second all staff survey. Make sure you share your views and help make a real difference to working here.

Although individual survey responses will again be completely confidential, responses will be reported back so that action can be taken. This time we will also be able to compare the results with those from the staff survey in 2009 to see how well we are progressing.

The Leadership team is fully-committed to Have your say 2011 and all staff are encouraged to participate. Managers have been asked to ensure that staff are given time to complete the survey in work time.

### What will you ask us?

Many of the survey questions will be the same as 2009 in order to help the comparison with what you said last time. However some new questions have been added to address topics that the Leadership team want to find out about and following feedback from staff focus groups. Before the survey takes place, the questions will again be tested by staff as part of our quality control process.

The University has appointed survey experts ORC International to administer Have your say 2011 following a competitive tendering exercise. ORC helped us to deliver the survey in 2009 and have access to data from other organisations who have asked similar questions to us and which will help to provide some context for our findings.

### Be involved

The 2009 survey achieved a response rate of 56% which is really good for a first survey but this time we want to do even better. The more people who respond, the more confident we can be that the results properly represent staff views.

Over the last two years, by way of making the University an even better place to work, Have your say action planning has been an important activity. All staff have had the opportunity to see their local results and to participate in action planning.

Still not convinced? Don't take our word for it, speak to your local Survey Champion who will be happy to discuss any concerns you might have and supply more information. For a full list of champions check out the intranet pages at: [www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/survey/](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/survey/)

### Listening to staff

A network of local Survey Champions is now in place across the University to help promote participation in the survey. Champions come from all walks of University life – support, managerial and academic staff at all levels have volunteered to take on this valuable role because they feel that the survey is an important way of listening to staff views.

Survey Champions also have an important role in two-way communication between staff and the survey project team. The Champions are helping the team to develop survey materials that work well for staff; they also feedback issues,

### Key facts to remember

- The results will be acted on – this is your chance to have your say and know that the University is listening
- We are using an external survey provider so that each individual's opinions will be kept strictly confidential
- ORC International will only provide the University with anonymised reports which present a picture of what groups of staff think – no one at the University will see individual survey questionnaires
- Taking part typically only takes a few minutes during work time
- The survey will be open from 7–31 March 2011

views and ideas.

Champions play an important role in the management of the survey with representatives from the champions network sitting on both the Steering Group directing the preparations and the more hands-on Project Team. Champions also have regular opportunities for informal feedback as well as sharing best practice with each other and the project team.

If you have any questions or require further information, do approach a Survey Champion.

## You said...we did

In November and February 2010 the Have your say 2009 Steering Group listened to a series of presentations from all the Colleges and Corporate Services reporting on summary action plans in each area.

The group were impressed by the range and diversity of the activities underway.

Here are just a few examples of how having your say has improved how we work together as a University community.

You said	We did
We'd like to see more of our senior leaders	Termly VC's Open Forums and more staff events in Colleges where members of University Executive Board and College Boards are available to talk with staff.
We want to know the strategic direction of the University	All staff were invited to participate in the development of 'Shaping our future: Birmingham 2015' the University's new five year strategy. All staff were issued with a summary version of the plan in November 2010.
Help us to develop in our roles	Activities including training around SDR/PDRs, Learning and Development plans, encouraging staff to take up networking opportunities and investigating new ways of working on projects.
Improve internal communications	A diverse group of staff from across the organisation worked together to develop actions that would make communication better. The Registrar's Leadership Group (RLG) issued a Guidance Note on Internal Communications in autumn of 2010.

There are many more examples of how feedback has been acted upon. Contact your local Survey Champion if you want to know more about how it has made a difference in your area.

## What did the 2009 survey say overall?



## What's happening next?

Have your say 2011 timeline

- **October 2010:** The Survey Project Steering Group and Management Team began detailed planning for the survey
- **October – December 2010:** Survey Champions recruited across all Colleges and Corporate Services
- **November 2010 – January 2011:** Questionnaire design and delivery planning undertaken in collaboration with the external supplier, ORC International, and internal stakeholders
- **March 2011:** Survey live – mostly online, with alternative formats made available
- **April 2011:** Preliminary findings shared with University Executive Board (UEB)
- **May – June 2011:** Local findings disseminated to all staff
- **June 2011 – November 2011:** Action Planning process undertaken in Colleges and Corporate Services

'The process of monitoring action planning activities has been rewarding and the Group has seen some examples of excellent practice that will be ongoing and which the University can build upon.

The findings of the survey have clearly been embraced enthusiastically by staff at all levels across the organisation.'

Professor Peter Daniels, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Staffing), Chair, 2009 and 2011 Have your say Project Steering Group

**Have your say 2011. Don't miss out – make sure you share your views on working here. Survey live 7–31 March 2011.**

Learn more [www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/survey/](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/survey/)

## Small changes... big difference

### Lee Costin explains how 2011 could be the year you THRIVE.

It's that time of year again; New Year's resolutions made but maybe already slipping? Obsessive visits to the gym have reduced and the healthy eating plan is back to 'one chocolate bar doesn't hurt'.

Sound familiar? Most New Year resolutions don't make it to the end of January because we set unrealistic goals. This is why UBSport's THRIVE team are offering a free drop in session for blood pressure checks and lifestyle reviews on Wednesday 26 January 11.00am–3.00pm.

Health is something a lot of us take for granted, forgetting that to enjoy our lives fully we need to look after ourselves, however small changes can make a big

difference. Regular blood pressure checks are so important and something many people just don't feel the need to do. If high blood pressure is left untreated it can leave you at risk for heart disease and other illnesses. At the roadshow we can help look at lifestyle factors and see what changes can be made to fit exercise in with your life.

The lifestyle review is an informal chat that looks at your current health, nutrition, work, life and social habits and the THRIVE team will be able to give you individual advice and recommendations – making sure the changes suit you personally.

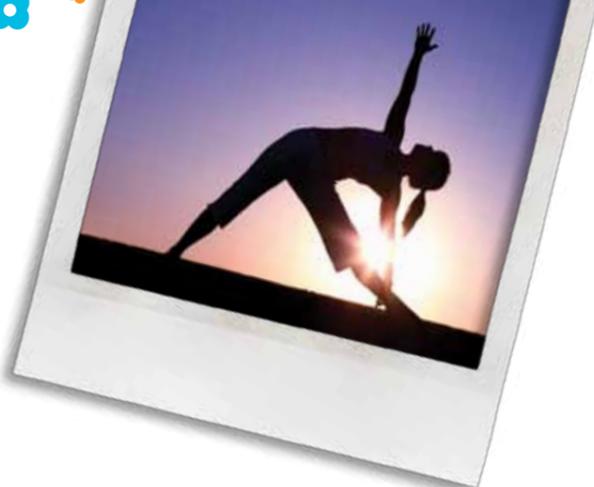
If that isn't enough motivation then we are giving away a free half an hour training session to all attendees. Whatever your

fitness level our personal trainers will help you realise your full potential to maintain physical and mental well-being.

Personal trainers can have a positive effect on helping you reach your health and fitness goals. The normal price of a one-to-one consultation, expert advice and motivation is £30 for 60 minutes.

**Meet the UBSport THRIVE team in the Noble room annexe, third floor Staff House on Wednesday 26 January, 11.00am–3.00pm.**

**Learn more**  
[www.sport.bham.ac.uk/thrive](http://www.sport.bham.ac.uk/thrive)  
or [thrive@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thrive@contacts.bham.ac.uk)  
or 0121 414 2581.



## By Day...By Night

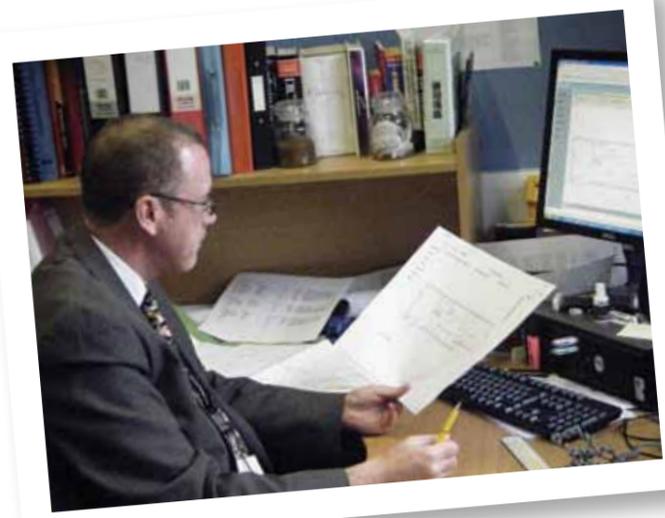
# Owen Thompson

### By Day

I am one of three Senior Estate Planners in the Estates Office with specific responsibility for space planning for the Colleges of Arts and Law and Social Sciences. A supplementary role includes responsibility for disability access across the campus assisting with the provision of reasonable adjustments to buildings and services for staff, students and potential visitors with disabilities.

I have been in post since February 1998, and have greatly enjoyed the experience and challenge thus far. Before joining the University, I worked in the Further Education sector within a busy Walsall college and with the Further Education Funding Council, as an Accommodation Officer and Statistics Manager respectively.

On a good day, I am planning the potential use of refurbished space or out and about on campus solving access issues with and for students and staff with disabilities. On a bad day, I have to act as the 'disappointment officer' and say no to a colleague's 'big idea' or I am chained to the PC updating the space utilisation database with the results of the annual space audit.



## Body Training System hits the spot

Learn more  
[www.sport.bham.ac.uk](http://www.sport.bham.ac.uk)

Active Lifestyle (AL) programme has introduced a new way of getting fit called the 'Body Training System' or BTS, which is the brainchild of New Zealand born ex-athlete Les Mills and his son Phillip.

BTS is a series of group fitness-to-music classes that have become an international phenomenon as instructors are required to attend quarterly workshops to learn choreography to new music tracks, ensuring everyone gets the same service worldwide.

Catherine Adams, UBSport's AL Development Manager encourages everyone to take part. 'If you want to do something fun and different to get fit then BTS classes are definitely the way to go. I know words like 'combat' and 'attack' sounds scary but it really isn't as each programme is designed to cater for all abilities.'

She continues: 'All instructors have been trained to adapt for each individual in the class, offering beginner up to advanced variations on each move. If anyone thinking of taking part is unsure about the content of the class they can speak to an instructor in advance to put their mind at rest.'

'Here at UBSport four of the eight programmes available are offered: Body Pump, Body Attack, Body Combat and Body Balance – each offering different benefits to a person's physique, fitness and mental wellbeing.

Combat and Attack are a great way to get a good cardio workout with fun routines. Pump is a strength based class where you can progress at your own pace to help tone and sculpt your body. Finally, Balance is great for a mental workout. It's similar to Pilates and yoga, but has the added benefit of music and specific choreography bringing your body into a state of harmony and balance.'

The Active Lifestyle programme will be offering free taster BTS classes for staff and students in January.



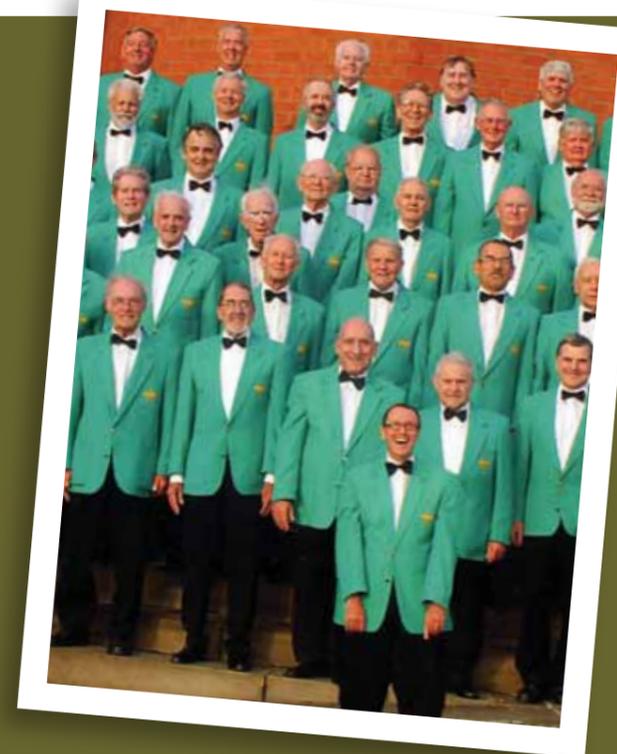
### By Night

On Tuesdays I spend the evening rehearsing as a member of the Birmingham Ickneild Male Voice Choir (BIMVC) at St. Chad's Cathedral in the centre of Birmingham. Originally founded in 1900 as the Ickneild Street Early Morning Adult School Male Voice Choir, we are the oldest male voice choir in the West Midlands and have been going strong ever since.

The choir consists of 52 men, approximately 13 per voice section. I am a second tenor, regarded, (by the second tenors) as the lynchpin voice section of any choir ensemble. It is a real joy to sing with the choir, no matter how stressful a day one may have had, such feelings melt away with a great lunch full of air and a burst of song. Our repertoire is very diverse from rousing Welsh Hymns and spirituals, classical pieces, songs from West End and Broadway shows, movies, and the latest chart toppers.

We perform approximately 12 times per year, mainly in ecclesiastical buildings throughout the West Midlands from small parish churches to Cathedrals, such as Lichfield and Worcester, generally supporting local charities. In October 2010, in celebration of its 110th anniversary, the choir performed at the Birmingham Symphony Hall, accompanied by 300 other voices from 10 other choirs, a local brass band, Sovereign Brass and the Welsh soprano Rhian Lois.

Having only joined the choir in 2009, I am still a 'new boy' but can state that performing is a real joy and the sense of camaraderie amongst the choristers, whose ages range from the mid-30s to the mid-80s, is wonderful. We are always looking for members and extend the hand of friendship, (the title of our latest CD) to any prospective new friends.



Learn more  
[www.bimvc.co.uk](http://www.bimvc.co.uk)

## January/February highlights

The events pages highlight the variety of activities taking place across campus. For a full list visit [www.events.bham.ac.uk](http://www.events.bham.ac.uk) or contact Events Co-ordinator Eleanor Leftwich on 0121 414 2950 or e.g.leftwich@bham.ac.uk.

[www.events.bham.ac.uk](http://www.events.bham.ac.uk)

### Inaugural lectures

To view a full list visit [www.mgmtgroup.bham.ac.uk/inaugurals](http://www.mgmtgroup.bham.ac.uk/inaugurals)  
**Contact:** Karen Wright  
**Email:** k.r.wright@bham.ac.uk

Thursday 3 February, 5.15pm  
**Mischief, Medicines and Molecular Architecture: A Journey Through Time and Molecular Space**  
Professor Nigel Simpkins,  
School of Chemistry  
**Venue:** James Watt Lecture Theatre (G31), Mechanical Engineering

Tuesday 8 February, 5.15pm  
**Exploring Virtues and Values in 3–25 Year Olds**  
Professor James Arthur,  
School of Education  
**Venue:** Business School Main Lecture Theatre (G12)

Tuesday 15 February, 5.15pm  
**Adolescent Brain Development and the Onset of Mental Illness**  
Professor Stephen Wood,  
School of Psychology  
**Venue:** Lecture Theatre NG08, Biosciences Building

Tuesday 22 February, 5.15pm  
**Economic and Political Crisis**  
Professor Peter Burnham,  
School of Government and Society  
**Venue:** Muirhead Main Lecture Theatre (G15), Muirhead Tower

Tuesday 1 March, 5.15pm  
**Sit Down for Shakespeare**  
Professor John Jowett, Shakespeare Institute, College of Arts and Law  
**Venue:** Lecture Theatre 1, School of Sports and Exercise Sciences

### Conferences and seminars

Wednesday 9 February, 6.00pm  
**Gorbachev, Reagan and new evidence on strategic weapons and the end of the Cold War**  
Delivered by David Hoffman author of the *The Dead Hand*, the Pulitzer Prize-Winning investigative history of Reagan, Gorbachev and the dying days of the Cold War.

Hoffman's lecture will tackle two areas of his research; Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative and how the Soviet leadership responded to it and the illicit Soviet bio-weapons program and how it developed in the 1980s and why. He will also discuss the role of the UK and Margaret Thatcher in these events.

Wednesday 23 February, 6.00pm  
**Building a fairer, safer, global society in a rapidly changing world**  
The John and Elnora Ferguson Memorial Lecture delivered by Lord Hannay of Chiswick

**Venue:** Birmingham Business School Lecture Theatre  
**Cost:** Free of charge but please register your attendance with Eleanor Leftwich  
**Contact:** Eleanor Leftwich  
**Email:** e.g.leftwich@bham.ac.uk  
**Tel:** 0121 414 2950

Thursday 10 March, 5.15pm  
**Developing Emotional Well-Being: Progressive Social Policy or State Intrusion**  
Professor Kathryn Ecclestone,  
School of Education  
**Venue:** Business School Main Lecture Theatre (G12) and afterward for a Reception in the Business School Atrium

Thursday 17 March, 5.15pm  
**Stuff: What is it and Why Does it Stick Together?**  
Professor Paul Newman, School of Physics and Astronomy College of Engineering and Physical Sciences  
**Venue:** Lecture Theatre Physics West 117

### Saturday Art School for Adults

On the third Saturday of every month the Barber is dedicated to teaching practical art skills to adults. All Saturday Art School for Adults sessions are inspired by a Barber masterpiece. Workshops begin with a gallery talk about a unique work of art or object in our collection followed by an art lesson taught by a practicing artist, stimulating both the mind and the senses.

**Time:** 11.00am – 4.00pm  
**Cost:** £45 per adult. All art materials, lunch and refreshments are provided.

22 January

**Drawing for Creative Thinking**  
Discover how observational drawing techniques used by artists for hundreds of years, can aid creative thinking and heighten awareness.

19 February

**Spontaneous Sculpture**  
Have a go at modeling the human figure in wax and clay using the methods of Degas and Rodin.

19 March

**Approaching Abstraction**  
This oil painting workshop unravels the ways in which Abstract artists, such as Fernand Léger, approached their work and expressed their ideas.

### LGBTQ history month

February is LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) history month. The staff Rainbow Network for LGBTQ staff and supporters will be organising events during February.

**Learn more** [www.equality.bham.ac.uk/staff/LGBTQI.shtml](http://www.equality.bham.ac.uk/staff/LGBTQI.shtml)



### Other adult activities and events

#### Speed Sketching

Friday 11 and 18 February, 1.30pm start, free, all materials provided  
To celebrate our re-display of Sculpture and Valentine's Day this month you can pop in to the Barber at lunchtime and become briefly acquainted with our fabulous collection of bronzes by drawing them as quickly as possible. Have a date with Degas and a romance with Rodin in our 30 min Speed Sketching sessions based on the ethos of Speed Dating!

#### Career development for research staff

The Employability Service for Research Staff (ESRS) has developed a range of specialist career management services for staff who are employed as researchers. This confidential service is designed to focus on the aspirations of research staff who are actively working to advance their careers within or outside academic settings.

The service keep abreast of career trends for researchers and have continued to listen to our active research staff and have an innovative range of services for this academic year.

**Learn more**

[www.as.bham.ac.uk/researchstaff/](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/researchstaff/) or contact [esrs@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:esrs@contacts.bham.ac.uk) if you would like an information pack or to join the mailing list.

#### Go Green Week

**Go Green Week** is an annual national week of action on climate change in schools, colleges and universities run by students. This year it takes place between 7–14 February and the theme is 'Love your future, love your climate'. The Guild will be organising events specifically for staff including 'meat free Monday' to promote low carbon diets and a cycling roadshow.

More information is available from [www.guildofstudents.com](http://www.guildofstudents.com)

### Accommodation to let

**Beautiful Spanish villa near Valencia.**  
Sleeps six, two en suite doubles with a/c, own pool. Email [xativavilla@talktalk.net](mailto:xativavilla@talktalk.net) for photos/info.

**Warm comfy room, 4ft bed, desk, kettle, fridge, TV/DVD, wifi. Shared bathroom, kitchen, washing machine, garden. Leafy view, two mins Five Ways station, one stop University or New Street and direct bus.**  
£300 month inclusive. Tel: 0121 440 5754 or Email: [belindahutchings@yahoo.com](mailto:belindahutchings@yahoo.com).

### Services

**Gardening work in all seasons**  
undertaken including fencing, patios, decking, garden tidying/clearances and gutter clearing. Telephone Chris on 0121 459 3292 or 07890 246911.

**DPM Roofing.** All aspects of roofing specialists UPVC, fascias, soffits and guttering. All work guaranteed.  
Tel: 07739 553574/0121 429 8434.

**Just Sew.** All garment alterations specialising in bridal and special occasion wear also soft furnishing. Tel: 07866 973011/0121 459 6046.

#### Tax return still in the in-tray?

Mynette & Co (est 1976) offers a local, personalised accountancy/tax advisory service. Tel: 0121 449 7322, email: [a.mynette@btinternet.com](mailto:a.mynette@btinternet.com).

### Get Involved

**Monday 31 January, 10.30am–4.00pm Great Hall, Aston Webb**

The University is teaming up with the Guild of Students for 'Get Involved' to showcase the best that Birmingham has to offer our students.

From student societies to volunteering; sports teams to study support and careers advice, come to the Great Hall to find out what Birmingham has on offer. The event is open to all students and staff who work with students might find this useful.

**Learn more**

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/events](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/events)

**For all your proofreading needs –** academic, commercial or creative, print or online. References available. Contact Liz Broomfield at LIBRO <http://libroediting.wordpress.com/home>

**'A Bump & Beyond' Midwife-led Antenatal Education Courses.** Available now in several Midlands venues. Tel: 07841 867607 (Val) or 07841 867610 (Liz). Email: [info@ababmidwives.com](mailto:info@ababmidwives.com).

**Morris at the MAC:** Want to improve your fitness? Curious about Morris dancing? Join us at MAC Canon Hill Park, Birmingham. No experience needed just a willingness to try traditional Morris. The sessions are free but there is a £5 booking fee refundable on the day. Sunday 27 February or Saturday 19 March 2011. Further information: 07922586310 or email: [FastDave@jockey Morris.org.uk](mailto:FastDave@jockey Morris.org.uk).

### Staff groups

Your staff group can advertise here and for FREE and we'll also list on [www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/useful/internal.shtml](http://www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/useful/internal.shtml)

**Birmingham University Staff Golf Society (BUSGS)** is a friendly club that organises five events per year including matches against Liverpool and Leicester Universities and the City Council, as well as fun internal knock-out comps. Players of all abilities and handicaps welcome. For more info contact Joe Hriljac ([j.a.hriljac@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.a.hriljac@bham.ac.uk)).

**//dejaview**  
experience it again.

**Deja View for lectures and events** is now available for use across campus. It allows lectures and events to be recorded in a format which combines audio, video and PowerPoint and can then be distributed via WebCT or email. Initial feedback has been very positive, with students finding the recordings a useful revision resource.

**Learn more**

[www.as.bham.ac.uk/learningspaces/eventcapture/index.shtml](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/learningspaces/eventcapture/index.shtml) or [learningspaces@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:learningspaces@contacts.bham.ac.uk)