



Making an Impact

February/March 2013

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood

YOUR BUZZ

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Front cover image:

Professor Alice Roberts, Professor of Public Engagement in Science.

Vice-Chancellor's View

Fine wine in new wineskins: lectures, MOOCs, and more

With increasing frequency we are told that the lecture is now dead and ought to be interred. If this is true, I, for one, will mourn its passing.

My own intellectual formation was crucially dependent on interaction with people as well as with other forms of learning and engagement. Many of the most compelling and intellectually-stretching experiences I had were in lecture theatres where I had the privilege of seeing brilliant minds at work.

In my second year as an undergraduate, for example, I decided to attend Charles Taylor's lectures on the history of political thought. In a way I had never witnessed before, his lectures enabled me to see a mind at work. He paced around the lecture theatre and, as it were in front of our eyes, constructed lectures of quite extraordinary brilliance, depth, and clarity. It was the historian's equivalent of seeing a brilliant mathematical mind developing a wonderfully eloquent solution to a complex equation. The consequence for me was a serious interest in the history of political thought, which I can date from those lectures.

In a similar way I recall, Colin Lucas's lectures on the French Revolution. His was a quite captivating style in which we were drawn into particular readings and understandings of the French Revolution, as if privileged initiates.

The effect here was simultaneously to enable us to understand events of enormous complexity, whilst prompting us to read more widely and in quite different and infinitely more critical ways.

Then I recall the lectures delivered by Simon Schama, whilst still a relatively young man. His were disarmingly entitled 'Industrialisation of Society in Nineteenth Century Europe'. They really weren't about this at all but offered a reading of Europe's social and political developments in the

nineteenth century, which was at once brilliant and highly idiosyncratic. They provoked and compelled, and left me with a huge admiration for a historian with whose analyses I have often disagreed but I was made to think differently as a result of the sheer pleasure of his lectures.

I recall these experiences not simply through nostalgia but in order to make the point that, for many of us, the lecture was a critical part of our university education.

Given that universities are places where knowledge and understanding are developed, contested, and deepened, the lecture will surely continue to have a place in our leading residential universities.

I was confirmed in this belief recently when flying back from Hong Kong on a Cathay Pacific 747. Looking through the menu of in-flight entertainment, I noticed a series of Harvard Law lectures. At least one major carrier not only believed that the lecture had a future but that it would have an audience on a jet flying back from Asia. Of course the lectures were carefully chosen, the lectures themselves brilliantly executed, and the setting both iconic and compelling. But it was, I thought, one in the eye for those who proclaimed the death of the lecture.

My purpose, though, is not simply nostalgia for a style of teaching which I relished as a student and happened to be rather good at as an academic. It is, rather, by way of suggesting that as we think about embracing the new we should, both as teachers and as an educational institution, also think about the ways in which we can repurpose the traditional.

Those who value the lecture and still argue for its having a place in university teaching must simultaneously recognise that new technologies of communication and learning have radically repositioned the lecture in a quite different learning environment. Gone are the days when

the lecture was the optimal vehicle for transmitting information.

Simultaneously young people who have been schooled in learning environments which are radically interactive should not be recast as passive recipients or learners in a university environment.

That takes us squarely into new technologies of learning and the kinds of platforms in which we as a university need to invest in to facilitate and sustain radically diverse modes of delivery and education. Our new virtual learning environment will be, I am convinced, a major step forward. Rarely has there been such enthusiasm both from teachers and IT specialists for a product and IT platform. From those who have talked about the new iVLE there is a palpable sense of excitement in what it will bring both to the quality of our students' educational experience and the innovation which will be possible for those who teach.

Similarly our exploration of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) will take us squarely into new and still-beingcharted territory. Quite what MOOCs will mean over time is unclear. What is clear is that all leading universities are committing themselves to making some MOOCs available and having a presence in this rich new world of virtual learning possibilities.

Our approach to MOOCs will be informed by our unflinching commitment to quality and distinctiveness. In the first instance, therefore, we will develop a small number of MOOCs in areas where we believe that they will have high impact. Anyone who knows anything about MOOCs knows that this isn't simply a matter of 'putting a lecture online' or uploading slides and other visuals from teaching done in the lecture theatre or lab. A high quality MOOC will be resource intensive both in terms of the technical support it will require and the academic input that it will entail. We will learn as we go.

The world of higher education is changing at an unprecedented rate and in ways which none of us can fully appreciate. In charting a course in this new world, our view at Birmingham is that we should remain a residential university in which our students, be they undergraduates or postgraduates, can benefit not just from an education of the highest quality in a research-rich environment, but also from a wide range of other experiences that are available only in high-quality residential universities. In short, we remain committed to the idea of a university as a place of transformation.

Simultaneously, though, we must continue to seek out and develop new markets and promote new forms of learning. With this in mind there is now a wide-ranging and urgent debate within the University, seeking to identify the most appropriate and fruitful innovations. We will certainly continue to develop our high-quality distance-learning provision. We are clear that there will be an increasing role for carefully-developed articulation agreements with partners around the globe. It is also striking how quickly some of our most exciting initiatives are being taken up.

One recent example has been the huge interest in our distance-learning PhD in the College of Arts and Law. Here a novel approach which combines distance-learning with an annual visit to and immersion in the Birmingham campus experience has swiftly translated into high quality enrolments.

Looked at in this way, the new world should not intimidate but should excite us. New markets are a massive opportunity and new technologies of learning open new vistas for those who teach and those who learn.

In all of this, as ever, the premium is highest on those who teach creatively and those who can inspire learners. The lecture is one way of doing this, the MOOC another, distance-learning and academic chat rooms are others.

If we succeed in blending this ever-richer range of teaching and learning opportunities, and do so in a learning environment which locally and globally remains committed to the highest quality, there will never have been a better time or a better place to be a university teacher.

Vice-Chancellor's Open Forum

**Tuesday 26 February, 12.30–1.30pm
Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building**

Join the Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood, for his first Open Forum of 2013. Visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/events/VCOF/ for details.

Employability Toolkit

The University's Careers Network has developed a great new web based resource to inform and support the work of academics with their students. The 'Employability Toolkit for Academics' provides advice and guidance on careers skills development including:

- Essential graduate employability information and resources for Tutors and Admissions Tutors
- Examples of how employability skills and attributes are currently embedded in activities in each School
- Case studies of how students have engaged in work and voluntary experience related to their academic disciplines
- Information on graduate destinations and links to academic School and University data
- Details of careers support and guidance available in each academic School

You can access the toolkit at diglibdr.bham.ac.uk/toolkit/ and watch a short introductory video to the site at youtu.be/aiRVoUB3Lwc

The Careers Network would welcome your comments and suggestions on Toolkit content and can add any resources that you would like to submit for your School or College. For feedback or queries please contact Joan Cartledge, Development and Learning Consultant Careers Network, at j.m.cartledge@bham.ac.uk



Celebrating the best of Birmingham

Why is Birmingham such a great place to study, live and play? In the autumn term of 2012/13, the University's Marketing team asked current students to write and present a series of films about life as a student in Birmingham.

Participating students made a total of nine 'My Bham' films on a wide range of aspects of their life in Birmingham from study and accommodation to the city's cultural, music and LGBT heritage.

The aims of the project were to challenge preconceptions about Birmingham as a city, to portray the wider student experience both on and off campus, and to give prospective students the opportunity to find out more about what the City and

University have to offer. Increasingly prospective students want to hear from their peers, and My Bham gave current students the opportunity to share their views and experiences whilst learning new skills that can be used towards their Personal Skills Award (PSA).

The Marketing team worked with the University's Media Centre to ensure that students gained experience in both presenting and producing, and that finished My Bham films were of a high standard to be used as promotional tools for the University.

The My Bham films are available on the University's YouTube channel or by typing **#mybham** in the YouTube search filter.

BUAFTAs 2013

Congratulations to all of this year's BUAFTA nominees and to the winning teams and individuals who were announced at the awards dinner on 8 February. Visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/BUAFTAS for the full list of BUAFTA award and raffle winners. Also look out for more from our winners in the next edition of buzz.



WORKING TOGETHER TO FIGHT CANCER

Staff, students and alumni joined forces this month to raise more than £700 for World Cancer Day. The University's world-class Centre for Cancer Sciences, supported by Circles of influence, is revolutionising treatment for children with brain cancer, working on a new way to diagnose breast cancer and launching a groundbreaking clinical trial to improve life expectancy for prostate cancer patients.

Brain cancer in children

Brain cancer is a life-threatening dangerous and debilitating condition that affects hundreds of children across the UK every year. *'Our research provides non-invasive scans to identify the type of tumour and how aggressive it is. This enables us to develop the best treatment plan for each child,'* explains Dr Andrew Peet, Reader in Paediatric Oncology.

Breast cancer

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death of women in the UK. *'By understanding how gene mutations cause cancer, we will speed up diagnosis and revolutionise treatment,'* says Dr Jo Morris, Senior Lecturer in the School of Cancer Sciences. You can keep up to date with Jo's research live from the lab by following her on twitter twitter.com/JoRMorris

Prostate cancer

Birmingham is at the forefront of treating prostate cancer, the most common cancer in UK men. *'This new trial will protect patients from the cancer with a minimally invasive procedure. We hope to improve life expectancy and may eventually provide a cure,'* explains Dr Richard Viney, Senior Lecturer in Urology.

Thanks to the generosity of staff, students and alumni, World Cancer Day activities across the University included bake sales, sponsored superheroes and a video appeal. Thank you to everyone who is supporting our life-changing research. Along with our alumni, our fantastically generous staff have donated enough to enable 200 children with Burkitt's Lymphoma – an aggressive form of childhood cancer, which sees tumours double in size daily – to take part in a clinical trial, costing just £500. Learn more at birmingham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence



From bake sales to half-marathons, there are many ways you can fundraise for cancer research at Birmingham. For a fundraising pack, contact Laura Fairbanks on 48894 or laura.fairbanks@bham.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can text

**CIRC02 £5 TO 70070 TO
GIVE £5 TODAY.**



Circles of influence

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Winterbourne House and Gardens has a new range of fascinating rooms to explore, each providing an insight into how the Nettlefold family lived over 100 years ago.

Renovated rooms include the hobbies room, with a stamp collection, book plates belonging to the Nettlefold children and many examples of the very popular Magic Lanterns, which the family enjoyed. The nursery has also been brought back to life and will give the public a rare glimpse at the sort of toys with which the children would have played. Lee Hale, Curator at Winterbourne House and Garden explains *'The nursery is in the same room in which the Nettlefold*

children would have played, and it's great to see the room back to its Edwardian self. We are sure the new rooms will delight existing visitors as well as attracting new ones.'

Thanks to a grant from the Leverhulme Trust, the exhibition rooms will also house Artist in Residence Sara Hayward, who for the next 10 months will be working on pieces inspired by Winterbourne and the Arts and Craft movement. Sara's studio will be open to the public and visitors can see her work evolve.

Winterbourne is open daily from 10am–4pm and entrance is free for University staff and students.

WINTERBOURNE
HOUSE AND GARDEN





Astronomical fun

BBC Stargazing LIVE

Samantha Williams tells buzz about a recent outreach event on campus

Last month, the University's world leading School of Physics and Astronomy teamed up with the BBC to put on a unique stargazing experience for enthusiastic local stargazers. Over 1,500 people attended two events held at the University campus on 9 and 12 January 2013.

The outreach event was led by University student society, AstroSoc and the Gravitational Wave research group to partner the popular, prime-time Stargazing LIVE show with Professor Brian Cox and Dara Ó Briain, which aims to make science accessible and fun. On both days Chancellor's Court and Physics West became a hive of astronomical activity with excited members of the public eager to engage with the wonders of astronomy and the many games created by our world leading researchers.

In line with the BBC Stargazing TV series, activities were designed to encourage everyone, from the complete beginner to the enthusiastic amateur, to make the most of the night sky. Contributing to the national stargazing celebration, Birmingham's exciting events included planetarium shows, Mars Rover simulation, rocket making, telescope building, alien activities and night time star cruises, as well as topical talks and discussions with experts from the University's School of Physics and Astronomy. It really was fun for all the family!

University student society AstroSoc, a

group of undergraduate and postgraduate students interested in astronomy and the oldest society in the Guild of Students, developed plans for the night working closely with the team at BBC Stargazing LIVE. One of the lead organisers, PhD student, Sean Elvidge, was even interviewed by BBC Midlands Today as part of a special feature live from the Stargazing event, where reporter, David Gregory-Kumar relayed the excitement of what could be seen on the night to the West Midlands audience. Reflecting on the success of the events, Sean said *'I could not have been happier with how our two events for Stargazing LIVE turned out. Members of the public seemed to get a lot out of the activities we offered, whether light hearted – building air rockets, making Mars landers or watching the theatre production 'Bang!' – or taking part in our talks by experts. As a bonus, we were treated to clear skies over the University on Wednesday, which, with an array of telescopes set up, meant we were able to show people the planet Jupiter and its four Galilean moons.'*

Staff, students and the local community were invited to discover the ins and outs of space travel, the Big Bang theory and the solar system with University experts. Academics were on hand to support fun family activities but also to talk about the exciting research projects going on at the University, which contribute to the School's

renowned reputation. For example, Birmingham physicists from the Gravitational Wave research group are currently looking at how to observe gravitational waves or 'ripples in space and time' using the most sensitive gravitational wave observatory in the world: Advanced LIGO. Developing this revolutionary new instrument provides a radically new way of exploring the cosmos. This opens up the exciting prospect of new discoveries and reflects the University's position as a world leader in astronomy research.

Andreas Freise, Reader in Experimental Physics, said *'Stargazing LIVE was a great opportunity for our department to engage the local community in the important research activities that take place at the University. We provided hands-on activities and discussions on Einstein's theory of gravity and how it affects the structure of our universe. Many current research topics in Physics and Astronomy are providing new insights into the properties of stars, galaxies and exotic cosmic objects such as Black Holes. People are fascinated when they visit us to talk to Birmingham students who are contributing to large international science projects and to see the instruments and technologies that were developed and manufactured in the Midlands and are now installed, for example, in the Advanced LIGO detectors.'*

Student instructors:

Learning skills and saving lives



For almost twenty years, first-year healthcare students at the University have received innovative training in vital Basic Life Support (BLS) skills from fellow students. This successful programme, overseen by Resuscitation for Medical Disciplines (RMD), is a great example of peer-led student engagement that is helping to shape the next generation of healthcare leaders, researchers and educators.

Established by three medical students, the RMD Birmingham BLS course delivers practical 'hands on' instruction in a range of life-saving interventions. It is the largest BLS course in Europe, the only UK centre to award European Resuscitation Council (ERC) qualifications, and a core component of the curriculum for first-year Medicine, Dentistry, and Physiotherapy students.

The most enduring and innovative aspect of this course is its peer-led model. Each year almost 70 senior students deliver the BLS course, and gain vital teaching, assessing and instructing skills. Each participant receives an ERC BLS instructor or in-house assessor qualification and gain confidence from teaching vital lifesaving skills to over 650 of their fellow students. The process is coordinated by a committee of medical students, who are themselves overseen, reviewed and supported by a faculty of doctors who are experts in the field of resuscitation.

Providing students with the skills to deliver core curriculum components nurtures skills in leadership, teaching, and interdisciplinary clinical performance; and encourages professional and personal

development through a model which has been cited by the General Medical Council for its innovation and success. It also ensures that students studying Physiotherapy, Dentistry and Medicine learn alongside one another from their very first month at University; an interdisciplinary approach that has received substantial praise and was recently recognised at a national conference by the Centre for

assessors are similarly supported, and all must pass an in-house 'assessor training programme' before examining students' competence.

A process of continuous self-assessment fuels advances on the course, such as the recent incorporation of SkillReporter manikins to teaching sessions. These provide real-time feedback of cardiopulmonary resuscitation performance to students, and an objective insight into their strengths and areas requiring improvement. Students involved in the delivery of the course are also very active in researching BLS provision and teaching techniques. In the past year alone, they have completed, presented and published the results of five research projects.

This continual innovation, combined with a rigorous approach to adopting the latest guidelines and use of evidence-based teaching techniques, has established a teaching resource that the British Heart Foundation (BHF) recently recognised could dramatically enhance life support training amongst the wider population of the West Midlands. By collaborating with the BHF to form part of the Heartstart scheme, BLS tuition will be provided to over 3,000 Year 8/9 students each year from the University's 'Access to Birmingham' partner schools. This will not only provide enhanced teaching opportunities for students delivering the course, but will also strengthen links with local community groups and prospective students.

For more information visit rmbirmingham.org.

'The opportunity to train on this BLS course, and to receive such high quality training in essential life saving skills so early on in my career was one of the reasons why I chose to study at Birmingham. To be involved in running this course, however, and to have a key role in providing this instruction as part of a close, dedicated interdisciplinary team that is unique and innovative in many ways, is a privilege. I am proud to be a part of RMD at Birmingham and everything that it achieves.'

Nick Coffin,
Third Year MBChB Student

Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE).

Manikins, mock defibrillators, bandages and slings are used to create realistic training scenarios, and all student instructors are mentored in order to support them in their roles. Student

Visiting pasts, Developing futures

Bryoney Johnson finds out more about the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage, and how looking to our cultural past can inform future initiatives.



Professor Mike Robinson

We are probably all familiar with the iconic image of Ironbridge Gorge, and its reputation as the 'birthplace of the industrial revolution', however we may be less familiar with the University's longstanding links to this World Heritage Site.

The Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage (IIICH) is a unique partnership between the University and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust that shares a commitment to quality research, innovative education, creativity, and engagement with the international heritage sector and wider public.

'The IIICH provides an opportunity for scholars from all disciplines to focus on the field of cultural heritage through a multi-disciplinary lens' says Professor Mike Robinson, Director of the IIICH. A collaborative approach that combines the wealth of resources held at Ironbridge with the University's extensive cultural collections and expertise. *'Through the unique partnership we have with Ironbridge Gorge we are intimately linked with a World Heritage Site'* continues Mike, *'and we are working toward being one of the World's premier Centres for the study of cultural heritage'.*

But what exactly do we mean by 'cultural heritage'? For Mike the concept goes far beyond the industrial heritage with which Ironbridge has long been

associated, to an examination of how heritage has become an important part of social life and economies at the local, national and international scale.

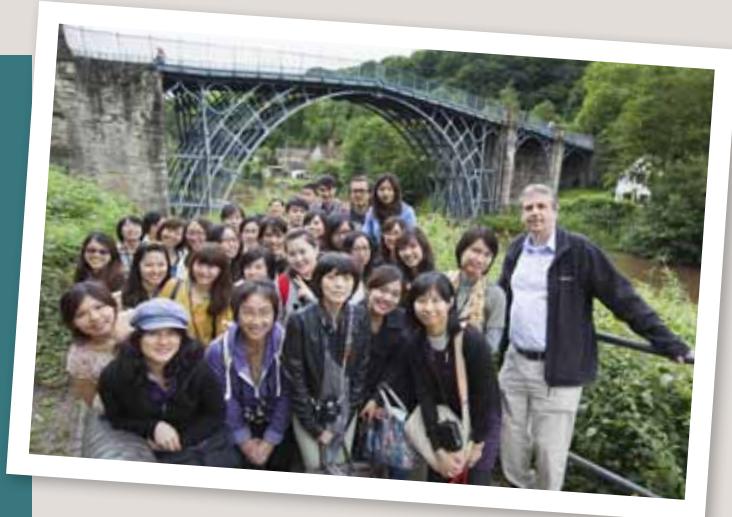
'The focus can no longer be merely on sites and objects but needs to be much more about the contemporary relationships that peoples, societies and cultures share with these things' explains Mike. *'We need to be concerned with what heritage means to us, how it is produced and consumed, represented, mediated and remembered, how it shapes identities and how power is exercised through the past and the claims we make on it'*.

There has been a successful partnership between the University and Ironbridge Gorge for over 30 years, a well established relationship that the IIICH will build on with new initiatives and approaches to the study of cultural heritage. This includes an enhanced profile for the Institute on campus, with teaching and exhibition spaces that will display the latest IIICH research together with highlights from the Ironbridge Trust's collections. *'This will not only provide University staff, students and visitors with increased opportunities to appreciate the partnership we have'* says Mike, *'but it will also increase the promotion of Ironbridge as one of the UK's first World Heritage Sites across the region and beyond'*.

Ironbridge tops 'must visit' list

Ironbridge Gorge is recognised as one of the largest independent museums in the world, managing 10 museums, and 36 listed buildings and scheduled monuments. This broad history and wide appeal was recently recognised when TripAdvisor reviewers named Ironbridge Gorge as the second most highly recommended UNESCO World Heritage Site in the world, and the top site in the UK.

Results were based on over 1 million traveller feedback forms, collected in partnership with UNESCO, and included all of the 962 designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites.





'With the appointment of a new Director and a genuinely international focus the future for the institute has never looked more exciting. The combination of a world-class university and one of the largest independent museums in the world has always been a powerful combination. With the addition of Ironbridge's World Heritage Site status you have a unique proposition for a wide range of funders and stakeholders as well as students from many disciplines.'

'Ironbridge offers researchers diverse museum collections, one of the most varied geological landscapes in Britain and a mature tourism destination. 2013 will see several new initiatives for the Institute including the Rust, Regeneration and Romance international conference and the creation of a joint exhibition for the Spurlock Museum, part of the University of Illinois'.

Steve Miller, Chief Executive of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

Below are just some of the activities helping to secure the IIICH's international reputation as a leading centre for cultural heritage studies and engagement.

International Summer School

In July 2012 the Institute launched its first summer school programme, welcoming 30 students from the National Taipei University of Education, and National Normal University of Taiwan. The students spent 11 days in Birmingham studying aspects of cultural heritage and tourism.

The programme provided students with content for their MA or EMBA studies in Taiwan, and comprised lectures and workshops run by Birmingham academics, plus visits to local areas of interest including Ironbridge Gorge, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and the Birmingham Hippodrome.

This was a great example of cross-University collaboration. Colleagues from the IIICH, Shakespeare Institute, Winterbourne House and Garden, Special Collections, Cultural Heritage Learning Hub, and Barber Institute of Fine Arts worked together to deliver the programme, and to ensure that students received a broad experience of the cultural heritage expertise and unique sites that Birmingham has to offer.

The programme allowed the University to develop its links with local cultural partners, and to enhance the relationship with Taiwan, and international insight to the West Midlands' extensive cultural offering.

Local links and global connections

The Institute is cementing its position as an international authority on cultural heritage and interpretation of research by organising many high profile international events throughout 2013. These include:

Tourism and the Shifting Values of Cultural Heritage: Visiting Pasts, Developing Futures – This conference will look at how tourism impacts on our understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage, and how values regarding the past have changed. It will be held in Taiwan and supported

by Taiwan's Ministry of Culture and National Taiwan University. Over 200 papers will be presented by delegates from over 60 countries, covering a wide range of subjects including history, heritage studies, museum studies, philosophy, political science, sociology, tourism studies and urban planning.

Rust, Regeneration and Romance – the Institute's annual conference will bring wide reaching global perspectives to Ironbridge this July. Attendees will examine the role of iron and steel as physical and cultural building blocks of modernity. From the earliest functional usage of iron in domestic life, to decorative cast iron, from weapons to knives and forks and from the use of high tensile steels in buildings around the world to the stainless steels of space exploration. The conference will provide a multi-disciplinary analysis of iron and steel landscapes and cultures, and showcase the expertise of the IIICH and Ironbridge Gorge to a wide range of academics and leading tourist markets.

International collaborations

In December 2012 the IIICH signed a cooperation agreement with the Collaborative for Cultural Heritage Management and Policy (CHAMP) at the University of Illinois. Like the IIICH, CHAMP is a research and education Institute dedicated to the critical study of cultural heritage and museum practices on a worldwide scale. Following reciprocal visits, funded through the University of Birmingham's Trans-Atlantic Collaboration Fund, the two Institutes are embarking on a series of joint projects examining trans-Atlantic dialogues on cultural heritage.

Professor Helaine Silverman, Director of CHAMP and Visiting Research Fellow at Birmingham, recognises the benefits of working with IIICH.

'We are delighted to be partnered with the Ironbridge International Institute at the University of Birmingham' she says, *'their international, inter-disciplinary approach to the study of cultural heritage is a perfect fit with our own and we have already embarked upon some innovative projects together.'* Further activity between the two Institutes will include joint conferences, publications and the development of joint modules at Master's level.



Collaboration in action

In a recent buzz (issue 138) we detailed exciting news regarding the landmark collaboration between the universities of Birmingham and Nottingham. **Niki McAllister** looks at some of the initiatives that have been achieved as a result of the collaboration and recent developments in international partnerships.

In March 2011, the Universities of Birmingham and Nottingham signed a historic framework agreement for collaboration, bringing together two of the Midlands most powerful research-intensive universities in a partnership focused on building on their complementary strengths.

There are several sources of support and funding available to staff as part of the collaboration. These include the Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration Fund, and a partnership between the two universities and the State of São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) on a joint research investment fund worth £480k. The funding aims to facilitate partnerships that will build high profile research collaborations, deliver scientific breakthroughs and innovations, and support a range of other initiatives such as the development of novel approaches to teaching.

There have already been six successful bids for FAPESP funding and several successful bids for Birmingham-Nottingham

Strategic Collaboration funding. We take a closer look at some of the research, projects and initiatives benefitting from collaborative approaches and funding.

Brazil's rise and its implications for world order

This extensive collaboration will look at Brazil's likely political and social leadership on the world stage and how it might influence and re-shape international relations. As the Brazilian economy continues to expand, this team hopes to assess how influential Brazil is and to what extent this country has become an emerging power over numerous dimensions of global governance. The main four areas of their research will include climate change, the regional dimension of Brazil's rise, the organisation of sporting mega events, and reform of the UN's Security Council.

Led by Dr Marco Vieira of the School of Government and Society, and Dr Johnathan Grix, of the School of Sport

and Exercise Sciences, the cross University research team also includes members from the universities of Nottingham and São Paulo as well as colleagues from across the University of Birmingham. '*What we want to do is to assess how influential Brazil is*' says Dr Vieira, '*to what extent has Brazil become an emerging power in a number of different dimensions of global governance or international decision making in security and intervention?*'

Funded by FAPESP, Dr Vieira believes that these '*institutionalised channels have become an interesting source of funding for research and development*' in all research areas. He believes that the successful funding bid also highlights that investigating '*Brazil as an emerging power is highly important*' both nationally and internationally. Previous collaborations and networks provided the team a solid base to apply for funding which they intend to use to meet specific objectives set by both FAPESP and the team itself.

Included in this will be a ground clearing exercise in Brazil to set key objectives of the collaboration, and a workshop with a call for papers and production of a piece to be entered into a high impact journal. Dr Vieira is also hoping to use '*conceptual and theoretical discussions to explore the rising powers in international politics*' within postgraduate teaching modules. He sees

'From railways to quantum sensors, Birmingham and Nottingham already share key strengths in a number of disciplines and have a history of successful cooperation, for example, jointly establishing and operating the £40m Manufacturing Technology Centre, part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult. As two of the most broad-based institutions in the UK, this new fund will allow us to greatly expand our joint activity and fully capitalise on our combined academic range. We have already received approaching fifty applications for projects from across all academic areas and from the professional services and have been impressed not only by their quality but by the range of existing and potential relationships between our two universities.'

Professor Adam Tickell, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer



the FAPESP funding as a launching pad to promote future partnerships and to develop research questions and opportunities for further funding. At the end of their funding period, the team is hoping to organise a workshop for academics and policy makers to discuss findings and what can be done in the future regarding policy decisions.

Regarding the advantages of the funding and collaboration Dr Vieira feels that it has '*enabled us to develop a number of projects and allowed some already in mind to come into fruition*'. It will continue to '*strengthen the institutional relationship between the universities and within departments*'.

Eighteenth-Century editing and the futures of reading

Following their successful bid for Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration funding Dr Valerie Rumbold, of Birmingham's Department of English, and Professor Brean Hammond, of the University of Nottingham, were able to prepare a major application for an AHRC Research Grant. Dr Rumbold described the extent of the project and how funding will allow '*an exploration of how the printed version of literary works assumes modern form through the interventions of editors in the eighteenth century, and how their editorial practices relate to the future of books and reading*'. The overall aim is to decipher '*to what extent readers today have inherited the futures of reading that eighteenth-century editors envisaged, analysing how and to what effect contemporary practices of scholarly editing have changed in the era of online information*'. They also plan on extending the collaboration to work with a nominated Research Fellow and Doctoral students.

Membrane receptors and state of the art imaging

Scientists from the Centre for Cardiovascular Sciences at the University of Birmingham, and Nottingham's School of Biomedical Sciences were successful in obtaining Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration funding to set up a collaborative workshop, held in January 2013. Primary researchers and representatives from pharmaceutical companies, and the Medical Research Council met and shared their expertise in advanced techniques for imaging cell surface receptors and signalling pathways.

Dr Steve Watson, of the University of Birmingham, explains how teams at Birmingham and Nottingham are at the forefront of research using state of the art microscopy. The focus of which is to '*investigate how cell surface proteins are organised and transmit signals across the cell membranes to control their function. Understanding this organisation is important for developing new drugs which target these receptors*'. Research such as this is pivotal to identifying likely causes, and possible diagnosis to well known health problems such as thrombosis. This provides great opportunity to build on and create new working collaborations with the view for exchange of personnel and collaborative expertise.

A main aim of the funding is to not only create effective working collaborations but to foster further bids for other funding sources. Dr Watson anticipates that '*several applications will be submitted ranging from small grants for training to more involved projects that will establish the foundation for a research proposal to a major funding body*'. He also hopes that

'longer term collaboration and cementing the relationship between the two groups at a university level will also be the subject of further discussion'.

Further funding opportunities

FAPESP: The fund will support joint research projects between FAPESP-funded researchers and researchers from either the University of Birmingham or University of Nottingham, or from both UK institutions. These collaborative research projects can be in any subject area though applications in some specific areas are especially welcomed.
intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/ris/research-support/eu/fapesp.aspx

Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration Fund: The fund will provide £400,000 to support collaborations between individuals and teams at the two institutions. Whilst research and knowledge transfer projects will be fundamental in delivering new innovations, support is also available for teaching and professional services initiatives to drive improvements in performance in all areas of the universities' missions.
intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/ris/Managed-Calls/Birmingham-Nottingham-Fund.aspx

Public Engagement – what do we do and how do we feel about it?

Last year, a motley crew of staff from Schools and Colleges across the University came together to form a pioneering band which would become known by the slightly unwieldy name of the 'Public Engagement Working Group' (PEWG). Our aims were ambitious and they still are – to support the great public engagement that already happens at the University, pave the way for more and better engagement by breaking down barriers, and to put public engagement right at the centre of academic life.

It was essential to start by finding out about attitudes to public engagement amongst academics, so over the summer we carried out a survey into what people thought about 'Public Engagement with Research'. I wish there was a brighter, friendlier term for it, but in the absence of one, I hope you'll forgive an abbreviation to 'engagement'. We were able to gather responses from the Colleges of Arts and Law, Engineering and Physical Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences and Medical and Dental Sciences; Social Sciences also captured their own data. Thank you to all who took the time to respond – the results will prove incredibly valuable in planning future engagement activity. Here's a brief summary of the results:

Firstly, engagement is clearly important to many academics; 84% of respondents had either led or had been involved in some form of engagement activity in the 18 months prior to the survey. One of the major findings of the LSE's Wellcome Trust-funded ScoPE (Scientist's on Public Engagement) report of 2009 was that

a general enthusiasm for engagement amongst researchers contrasted with a perceived lack of institutional support. We were therefore interested in finding out whether academics felt that UoB supported engagement, and it was encouraging to find a healthy majority of respondents felt that there was 'strong', 'good' or 'some' support for public engagement. However, whilst 70% felt that there was positive support for engagement at a University level, this dropped off at College and School levels (59% and 57% respectively).

This discrepancy could represent perceptions of logistical support available for engagement activities organised at different levels, for instance, campus wide events like Community Day versus activities initiated within Colleges and Schools. If that were the case, solutions could be relatively easy. Ensuring better support in terms of administration, mentoring and identifying funding streams is already a major focus for the PEWG. However, the survey results could represent something more insidious and intransigent; it could mean that some researchers feel the University's commitment to engagement is more idealistic than realistic, perhaps more about external image rather than changing the culture internally. I don't believe that is the case, and again, ensuring better support for engagement activity, as well as highlighting the great range of engagement which already takes place, should help to lay such doubts to rest.

In terms of barriers to engagement, most respondents did not feel that a lack of

motivation or training was an issue. The primary obstacle was seen to be time pressure, but other factors were also identified as important, including lack of recognition, reward or incentives, and lack of departmental or institutional support. I believe this presents us, collectively, with a direct challenge: if we're really serious about engagement, we need to recognise it as a valid component of academic work, alongside research, teaching and administration.

Through the PEWG, I hope that we may be able to help to create more time for engagement activities within already pressured academic jobs by taking away some of the basic administrative tasks associated with engagement: making it easier to find funding, to book venues or to advertise events, for instance. It's clear that many academics feel that public engagement is beneficial to their work: and can be complementary to both teaching and research. Perhaps we should be thinking about engagement as part of teaching and research, contributing to professional development and stimulating reflective practice, rather than a separate, isolated activity.

Responses to the survey also included useful indicators of areas where staff would appreciate engagement support, including training in creating events for festivals and outreach activities for schools, using social media, understanding different target audiences, and evaluating engagement activities. Again, through the PEWG, we will explore ways of implementing such training, as well as providing access to a network of mentors



Professor Alice Roberts

**Professor of Public Engagement in Science,
reports on the Public Engagement with
Research Survey and plans for the future.**

across the University. There is a substantial and growing number of people across the University who have engagement expertise and experience, and are keen to share that with colleagues; some have already identified themselves as College and School 'champions' for engagement.

We are also developing an intranet section dedicated to engagement. This will, I hope, be useful to academics and students looking for inspiration, advice, sources of funding and engagement opportunities, as well as providing a virtual meeting place for a growing network of people across the University. We're also hoping to develop community-facing content which will make it easier for people outside the University to find events and interact with researchers.

So that's a brief summary of the results of the engagement survey, and some of the aims and aspirations of the PEWG. In case that all sounded a bit abstract and dry, do turn the page for a few examples of the diverse range of engagement activities and events which took place in 2011–2012.



There are plenty of large-scale opportunities for public engagement on the horizon, including **Community Day** in June, and the **British Science Festival** in 2014. For further details on engagement opportunities, or if you'd like to put on an event or activity, please visit: intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/publicengagement

Also, leave your calendars open for the University's first **Arts and Science Festival** (18–25 March), a week-long celebration of the University as an exceptional research institution. Taking place across campus, the festival will showcase culture, research and collaboration at the University through talks, exhibitions, performances, workshops and screenings open to staff, students, alumni, and beyond. Turn to page 19 of this edition of buzz for further details.

Inspiring Engagement

Dr Eliot Marston, of the Public Engagement Working Group, shares just a few examples of the diverse range of engagement events and activities that took place in 2011–12.

Campus-wide

A great example of recent campus wide engagement was 'Brum Dine With Me' which saw researchers from across campus getting out and about to try to communicate their work in as fun and interactive a way as possible. Events ranged from dances choreographed by Birmingham Royal Ballet and a multicultural 'eat and greet' in the mac Birmingham; eating insects and space ice cream while learning about fair trade and food ethics in Brindleyplace; a talk by Deborah Cadbury and a personalised 'calorie maths' map in the Bramall Music Building. Attracting around 5,000 people, it was a great opportunity to show the wonderful amount of ideas that go into the food we take for granted every day, and how research is trying to help people live healthier and happier lives through some very simple, practical steps. There is a highlights video on the University website at birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/brum-dine-with-me/.



College of Life and Environmental Sciences

Dr Robin May and his team from the School of Biosciences have taken part in a number of public

engagement activities recently, including the Big Bang Fair last March and events at the Thinktank Museum. Fun science activities to engage both adults and children included making 'name necklaces' from DNA code, isolating and extracting DNA from strawberries, and looking at their own oral bacteria under the microscope.



College of Arts and Law

Dr Adam Ledger demonstrated the power of intimate theatre through 'The Caravan Show', developed with The Bone Ensemble and in collaboration with mac

Birmingham. The piece was designed for family audiences of four spectators at a time, taking place in a small touring caravan, and is now destined for a national tour.

College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Professor Bob Stone's team brought together virtual and physical history when they enabled the HMS Amethyst to sail once more along the river Tamar. The ship was broken up in Sutton Harbour in 1957, but the team restored the 1,350-ton, 238ft frigate to showcase how mature and usable Augmented Reality technology is, and as an example of Virtual Navy Heritage. They were also able to spend an inspiring evening with surviving HMS Amethyst crew from 1949.



College of Social Sciences

Dr Chris Allen followed his presentation to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia by leading a discussion event as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences, 'From Pavement to Parliament: shaping the policies to tackle Islamophobia'. With contributions from policymakers, social scientists and members of the public, the event helped Birmingham residents to understand the policy process, ask questions and voice their opinions.



College of Medical and Dental Sciences

Debbie Ringham continues her impressive run of engagement activities around the Birmingham Cancer Research UK Centre. Activity includes recurrent slots at the Thinktank science museum, Race for Life fundraising events, and a Cancer Showcase in April 2013. The Showcase will invite individuals and groups from the local community into the Medical School to personally experience the diverse and inspiring range of activities and improvements to which the Centre is contributing.



Enterprise Development

Nurturing entrepreneurial researchers

The Enterprise Development team support entrepreneurial culture among researchers to promote the value of research in creating impact through knowledge transfer and commercial activity. The team run a range of events to engage, motivate and inform researchers; and assist academics interested in developing skills in commercialising their research and creating economic impact.

A key element of this support is the 'Enterprising Birmingham Innovation Competition' that develops innovative ideas, and rewards enterprising academics that pursue enterprise based on their research. The Enterprising Birmingham Showcase, to be held in the Business School on 26 March, promises to be an exciting demonstration of some of the University's brightest commercial projects as finalists battle for a share of the £24,000 prize money in front of a panel of expert 'Dragons'.

The showcase is a celebration of the creativity and entrepreneurship of our researchers, and will include guests from the world of business and commerce as well as Birmingham alumni.

The 2011 showcase winner in the 'service' category was Dr Wai-Ling Bickerton, with The Birmingham Cognitive Screen (BCoS), an innovation that delivers a visual snapshot of the cognitive abilities of stroke survivors which can be used to guide clinical decision making. BCoS has been commercially developed to be licensed for publication with Psychology Press, and offers training to health professionals in adoption of the assessment tool.

Dr Rustam Stolkin, from the School of Computer Science, won the 'product' category with his novel all-terrain robot

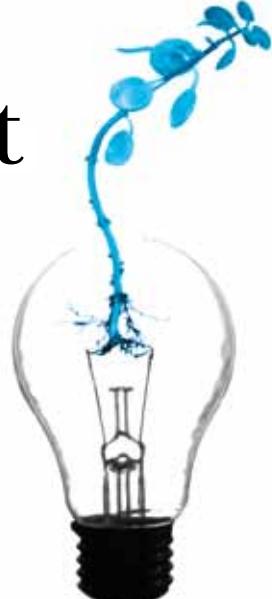
capable of negotiating steps. Since winning the competition Rustam has generated major collaborations with the UK defence and nuclear industries, generating more than £200,000 of external funding. Both these areas have tremendous commercial potential in a £multi-billion market for robotics applications.

This year's showcase on 26 March is open to all University staff. For further details or to register attendance contact Sofia Hansrod at s.hansrod@bham.ac.uk



Medici Enterprise Training Programme

This intensive seven day programme is available for all researchers with an interest in commercial development. This includes: exploitation of intellectual property through licensing, consultancy, setting up CPD programmes, collaboration with business or contract research. The programme gives an introduction to business related skills such as intellectual property, sales and marketing and other personal skills such as networking and negotiation.



“

'The Enterprise Development team on the Research Park are a huge asset and offer a wide range of experience and advice. I've been able to go to many of their lunchtime meetings, and the topics and quality of speakers are superb. It's very refreshing to hear about subjects such as marketing, design or company structure. My advice, go and take part in this – the unit is a gem and could change the direction of your career!'

Professor Paul Moss, Head of the School of Cancer Sciences

'Medici training gave me the tools to successfully engage in starting my own company I was surprised to find that the skills taught in the course have a much wider application than just business.'

Professor Tim Dafforn, Biotechnology

'Medici training was very comprehensive and a real eye opener on the multifaceted aspects of business. This has now resulted in the development of several projects which will hopefully expand the scope and applications of my research.'

Dr Francois-Xavier Li, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences

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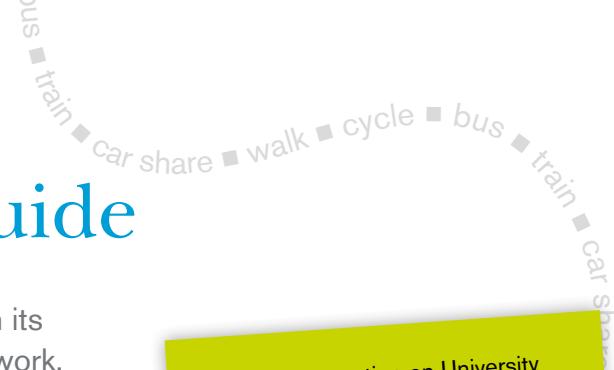
Networking for Innovation Seminar

**Wednesday 27 February
12–2pm (Lunch provided)**

Our next lunchtime seminar will give you the tools and strategy to build a strong and effective network. Seminar open to all research staff and academics, contact us to register for this event.

The team can also provide tailored support to Schools and Colleges by arranging bespoke events focused on

specific research interests and goals. To find out more about how Enterprise Development can help you contact Catherine Mansell, Enterprise Development manager, at c.mansell@bham.ac.uk, or Sofia Hansrod, Projects and Events Manager at s.hansrod@bham.ac.uk



Smartmover Travel Guide

The University provides a wide range of incentives within its Sustainable Travel Action Plan to support your travel to work. Whether walking, cycling, driving or commuting, below are just a few of the tools available to help ensure that your journey is as stress free, healthy and sustainable as possible.

Cycling

A wide range of UoB initiatives support cycling including:

- Cycle roadshows held throughout the year with FREE bike maintenance, cycle training and security tagging plus sale of second hand bikes, lights, D Locks and high-vis jackets
- Cycle maintenance classes to teach you how to fix a puncture, replace inner tubes, adjust brakes and gears
- FREE cycle maps of Birmingham
- Cycle facilities across campus
- Cyclescheme, a staff salary sacrifice scheme to help you purchase your own bike

Support and advice is available from the Birmingham University Bicycle Users Group (BUBUG). For further details and dates of upcoming events visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/has/sustainable-travel/Cycling

Public transport

There are many public transport options available to University staff, students and visitors. UoB is the only UK mainland University with its own train station, there are many bus services that directly serve the Edgbaston and Selly Oak campus and a FREE shuttle bus service operates during term time (Mon–Fri) between Edgbaston and Selly Oak sites.

For further details visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/has/sustainable-travel/Public-transport

For more information on University travel initiatives, plus free advice, guidance and support please contact the Sustainable Travel Co-ordinator at sustainabletravel@contacts.bham.ac.uk or visit the sustainable travel website at bham.ac.uk/travel



Discounted travel passes

The University offers interest free season ticket loans to members of staff who use public transport to travel to work. For example, the University, working in partnership with National Express West Midlands, provides staff with a 25% reduction on full price annual bus passes. For further information on passes and schemes available visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/payroll/Season-Tickets.



HAVE YOUR SAY ON LOCAL TRAVEL

A UoB travel survey has been launched to provide an opportunity for all staff and students to submit feedback and comments about their current journey to the University.

How do I complete the survey?

- The survey period is now open and runs until 31 March 2013

- The survey can be completed online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/uobstafftravelsurvey, paper copies are also available at Aston Webb reception or by emailing Jane Harris at j.m.harris@bham.ac.uk.
- The survey comprises multiple choice and open response questions and should take no more than a few minutes to complete. All information you supply will remain anonymous and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Why should I complete the survey?

- **Share your views** – your feedback is important as it will help to understand current travel patterns and highlight areas where the University's Sustainable Travel Plan can be developed and enhanced.
- **Improve your services** – the survey

will also help to identify general issues in travelling to work, and where the University can engage with local transport providers to improve public transport routes. You may also have ideas that you could share with us to help improve, support and encourage sustainable travel choices.

- **Win an iPad** – everyone who completes the survey will have the option to enter a free prize draw to win an iPad and gift vouchers.

What happens next?

Survey results and recommendations will be made available to all staff, and findings will help to inform the University Sustainable Travel Plan.

If you have any queries please contact the Sustainable Travel Coordinator, Jane Harris at j.m.harris@bham.ac.uk.

news+views



Our University is home to some of the most progressive thinkers of our time, with research and expertise addressing today's global challenges and helping to shape modern society. Our new regular feature will give buzz readers a quick tour of the latest University news and views hitting the headlines and how you can add your views via our online community.

in the news

Many articles about UoB research and expertise appear in local, national and international press every day, here are just a few examples of our recent news highlights...

Mirena coil as a treatment for menorrhagia

This joint research project with University of Nottingham was featured widely by the Health press and Dr Janesh Gupta, lead at the University, was interviewed on BBC Midlands Today and BBC radio 4's Woman's Hour. The research findings were also featured internationally in Fox News and the Philadelphia Inquirer, among others.

'Portrait of a Lady'

The Barber Institute's exhibition to celebrate its 80th anniversary was reviewed by the Independent and the Birmingham Post. The Post and Mail continued to feature the exhibition and BBC Midlands Today also did a feature piece for the launch.



If you would like to work with the press office, or find out more about how they can help you promote your research, email pressoffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk or call 0121 414 6029



Battle for stability in Sahara

Dr Berny Sèbe has become a popular media commentator on the conflict in Mali and Algeria providing interviews on Newsnight and BBC News. He gave over 20 interviews over a 48 hour period as news of the hostage situation broke.

Embarrassing Fat Bodies

Dr Sam Shepherd and Dr François-Xavier Li (LES) appeared on Channel 4's Embarrassing Fat Bodies providing expert advice (and equipment) to Dr Christian.

Stargazing LIVE

BBC Midlands Today held a live outside broadcast from the University's event and interviewed PhD student, Sean Elvidge (EPS). The event was also featured by the Birmingham Mail.

feeling social...

The University's online community continues to grow with over 23,500 followers on Twitter and more than 30,000 fans on Facebook. Staff, students, alumni and members of the local community interact with the University via our Social Media channels; sharing views and catching up on the latest news at UoB and beyond – as it happens.

Recent top Tweets and features include the ever-popular **#WhereOnCampusWednesday** (Twitter and Facebook), which challenges us all on a Wednesday afternoon to guess where on our Edgbaston campus a puzzling photograph has been taken.

University of Birmingham in the Snow – as the snow hit in mid January, students celebrated the campus' beauty, sending in photos for a new Facebook photo album. This received over 550 likes and nearly 100 shares in the first day of its creation. Over on Twitter, images submitted with the hashtag **#UoBsnow** have been collated in a blog which you can view at www.storify.com/unibirmingham/uobsnow. Our top Tweet this month comes via the College of Arts and Law's Web Manager William Fallows who produced a fantastic video documenting the Edgbaston campus covered in the white stuff. To watch the video type **#UoBsnow** in to the YouTube search box.

Join the UoB online community

Follow us on Twitter at **@unibirmingham** or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unibirmingham

If you use Social Media at work and feel you would like to increase your visibility across campus, do get in touch with our Digital Marketing and Communications Team via k.connolly@bham.ac.uk

These are some highlights of the events coming up across the University, to find out more visit birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus.index.aspx



'Oh What A Century It's Been': Noel Coward and his Circle in 20th Century Theatre

Date: Until 25 March

Venue: Main Library Foyer

Noel Coward (1899–1973) was a prolific and successful playwright, composer, actor and singer of the twentieth century. This LGBT History Month exhibition celebrates the life and work of Coward and his close friends and collaborators, including actress Gertrude Lawrence (1898–1952) and designer Gladys Calthrop (1894–1980).

The material in this exhibition is drawn from collections held at the Cadbury Research Library.

Visit birmingham.ac.uk/crl for more information

Community Day 2013

Sunday 9 June, 11am–4pm



Annual International Rules exhibition match: Aussie Rules Vs Gaelic Football

Come down to the Bournbrook pitch at **7pm, Friday 22 March** to witness the inaugural University of Birmingham Aussie Rules Vs University of Birmingham Gaelic Football exhibition match! Plus, food, drinks and entertainment will be provided.

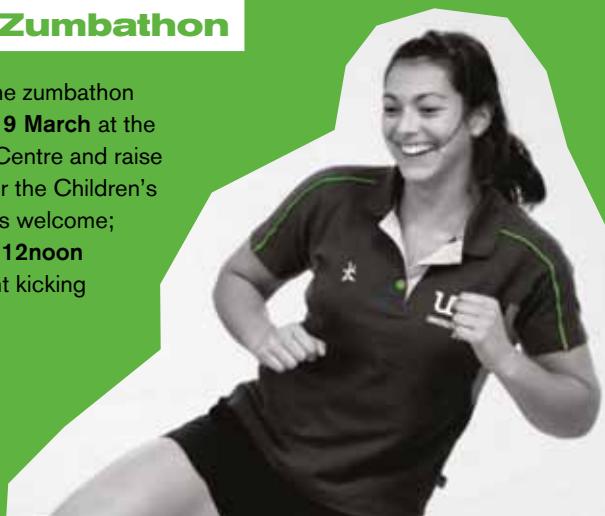


UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
SPORT

For further details on events visit
sport.bham.ac.uk

Charity Zumbathon

Come and join the zumbathon fun on **Saturday 9 March** at the Munrow Sports Centre and raise valuable funds for the Children's Trust! Everyone is welcome; registration from **12noon** with the big event kicking off at **1pm**.



Baggs Happiness Lecture 2013

Date: Monday 17 June 2013, 6.30pm

Venue: Great Hall, University of Birmingham

This year's Baggs Memorial lecture on the theme of Happiness will be delivered by the charismatic and popular broadcaster Gyles Brandreth. Gyles is an established broadcaster, successful novelist, and former MP and Government Whip. Today, Gyles is probably best known for his role as reporter on BBC1's The One Show and as a regular guest on Radio 4's Just a Minute. Recently he has appeared on QI, Countdown, The Matt Lucas Award Show, Have I Got News For You and Desert Island Disks.

This event is free but registration is essential. Visit birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus/events/Baggs-Memorial-Happiness-Lecture-2013 to reserve tickets.

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Arts AND SCIENCE FESTIVAL

18–24 March 2013

venues across campus
and the city



The festival takes place at locations throughout the University including the Great Hall, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Winterbourne House and Garden, and the Bramall Music Building. With over 70 events including screenings, performances, talks, exhibitions and events, Arts and Science Festival promises to be a jam-packed week.

Programme Highlights

Monday 18 March, 1pm

**Connections: Communication
in Ancient Egypt**

Mingana Room, Selly Oak Campus

A groundbreaking exhibition of ancient Egyptian artifacts; 'Connections' investigates ancient methods of communication. This brief introduction and open exhibition will allow you to get up close and personal to related artefacts and ask experts about how ancient Egyptians communicated. Free admission, no booking required.

The University will host its first Arts and Science Festival this spring to showcase the wealth of ideas, research and collaboration across campus. There's something for everyone, including special events with regional partners such as Flatpack, and Vivid Projects.

'Public Engagement is at the heart of the Birmingham experience, and the University is focused on engaging with a range of publics including staff, students, alumni, the local community and beyond. Our desire to share the wealth of knowledge across campus has lead to the University's first Arts and Science Festival, a public programme of exhibitions, talks, performances, workshops and screenings which celebrates the University's identity and makes available the first class research generated by one of the UK's leading higher education institutions.'

Ian Grosvenor, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Cultural Engagement



Monday 18 March, 6pm

**A leg to stand on: Prosthetics,
Art and Robots presented by Nick
Hawes (Computer Science) and
Camila Smith (History of Art)**

LG14, Learning Centre

This session explores the shifting constellation of relationships between bodies, technologies and subjectivities. It looks at ways in which Western visual culture such as, photographs, advertising and art have engaged with disability, in particular prostheses and how this culture both challenges and reasserts the ideal body image. Free admission, booking required. Please email s.a.franklin@bham.ac.uk with 'Robots' in the subject line to reserve a place.

Visit [birmingham.ac.uk/
artsandsciencefestival](http://birmingham.ac.uk/artsandsciencefestival) for
further details and events.

Tuesday 19 March, 7pm

10x10 The Journey Home

George Cadbury Hall, Selly Oak Campus

Featuring writers from UK, Ireland and the US, and performed by a professional company assembled especially for the event, 10x10 brings 10 exciting new 10-minute plays from members of the University of Birmingham Masters Playwriting course. Call 0121 200 0946 to book (tickets £5, in aid of Playwrights' Workshop).

Thursday 21 March, 12pm

Victorian Magic Lantern Show

Winterbourne House and Garden

Join a fascinating experience traveling back in time to the 1890s, with exciting images of volcanoes, glaciers and earthquakes shown alongside coloured moving images from the period. Experience how University of Birmingham students studied in the Victorian age in this Magic Lantern show brought to you by Winterbourne House and Garden and the Lapworth Museum of Geology. Free admission, booking essential, please email enquiries@winterbourne.org.uk to reserve a place.

Professor Alice Roberts, Professor of Public Engagement in Science... in my own words



It's a year since I started my post at UoB, and I can't quite believe it's been that long. On the other hand, it's been a packed 12 months. In my half-time post at Birmingham, I'm a fairly traditional academic, with teaching and research responsibilities, as well as particular roles related to supporting public engagement with research across the university, including delivering seminars and chairing the Public Engagement Working Group (PEWG) with Professor Ian Grosvenor.

The other half of my working life is more eclectic – I work as a freelance science presenter for various BBC productions, and as an author and science journalist. I find there is great synergy between these two spheres of work, which may seem - superficially - disparate. The types of television documentaries I work on bring me into contact with many experts in a huge range of fields, and I'm constantly discovering new insights and ways of looking at human anatomy and evolutionary anthropology. Working with producers to create narratives about science has made me much more aware of the power of storytelling, and I'm sure it's also made me a better teacher.

My route into academia was through teaching: after studying Medicine and working as a junior doctor in South Wales, I moved to Bristol to work as a surgical SHO and medical demonstrator for six months. I loved teaching anatomy – particularly in a hands-on way, with small groups of students, in the dissection room. Although I had originally planned a surgical career, academia won me over, and I ended up staying in the Department of Anatomy for 11 years. As well as teaching and research, I sought out opportunities to talk about anatomy and physical anthropology with a wider audience, through public talks, schools outreach, and CPD courses for medical professionals. In 2001, I appeared as a 'human bone expert' on Channel 4's *Time Team* series, and that led to becoming a science presenter for the BBC.

I've recently been working on a few television projects, including two major series for BBC2. *Prehistoric Autopsy*, a three-part series on human evolution, aired in October last year. Over three days of studio filming, we brought together a great range of palaeoanthropologists from universities across the UK, and US. There was a fantastic, scholarly buzz about the whole thing, and it was refreshing to be able to tackle controversies and air some of the debates in the field. The second series I've been working on, with the

Natural History Unit, is called *Ice Age*, focusing on Pleistocene megafauna and their demise. Expect plenty of woolly mammoths, giant ground sloths and sabre tooth cats. And – just as I prepare to go off on maternity leave with my second child – I've filmed a Horizon programme on human development, *in utero* and in the first weeks and months of life after birth.

When I started at UoB, I knew there was already plenty of excellent public engagement going on within the university, and significantly, that there was real senior support for this aspect of academic life, and for the role that universities play within wider society. But there was always more to do, and I think we've made some real progress over the last 12 months. Through the PEWG, we've been able to award small grants to support public engagement, and there's a growing network of expertise and experience across the university. I look forward to seeing a greater UoB contingent at Cheltenham Festival of Science in June, and we also have a great range of exciting events coming up closer to 'home', including the Arts and Science festival in March, the annual Community Day, the Library of Birmingham Festival, and the British Science Festival.

I am sure that public engagement with science, (and with research more generally) is worthwhile, for many reasons. I do think there's a moral obligation, especially since so much research is publicly funded. Public engagement is undoubtedly important for a university: for securing funding, recruiting staff and students, and increasing the impact of research. But there's also something more philosophical at stake, which involves transforming a university from an 'ivory tower', where knowledge is generated by an elite, for an elite, into something much more connected with the wider community, where research is undertaken for the public, and the public help to determine the direction of research. At a personal level, public engagement may also help researchers to contextualise research or find new avenues of investigation. Alongside these quite functional considerations, there is something much more joyful about this aspect of academic life. Practically everyone I've met who's done anything which could be described as 'public engagement' speaks about fulfilment, satisfaction and excitement. To me – those are the best reasons for becoming an engaged researcher. ,