



February/March 2018

*Inspirational
Impact*



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Vice-Chancellor's *view*



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood

Why bother with research impact? There are, I suppose, two easy answers. The first is the simple rhetorical question: 'who wants to do research that has no impact?'

And if this does not work for you there is the hard reality that in REF 2021 research impact will count for 25% of a unit's, and thus an institution's, score.

So the inescapable reality is that impact matters. It is, and it must be, an absolute priority.

The history of impact and the REF is both interesting and revealing. Back in February 2006, the then Chancellor, Gordon Brown, announced that the Research Assessment Exercise would be abolished, and in future, all research funding would be driven by competitively won funding from research councils and other research funders.

As it happened, this was exactly the month that my appointment as Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council was announced. I therefore determined that my first priority was to save the RAE. The decision was reversed in the summer of 2006 and RAE 2008 went ahead.

There were, however, important consequences. The Treasury made it clear that it remained unconvinced that it was getting a sufficient return on the public investment in research and believed that the higher education sector, and the Research Assessment Exercise, had not yet demonstrated convincingly the economic and social benefits of research. The challenge was put to me and to the Funding Council to come up with an enhanced mechanism to demonstrate the value of research.

At stake here was the scale of future research funding, and indeed our ability to fund the results of RAE 2008. What we came up with were impact case studies, and I persuaded the Treasury that we could incorporate impact through the evaluation of impact case studies in the next RAE.

After much work, the methodology was refined and impact was first run in REF 2014. After much apprehension, the general view was that the impact case studies in REF 2014 were a success. They certainly gave convincing evidence which persuaded government to enhance its funding commitment to research. We see some of the fruits of this in the increased funding commitment running through to 2021. Also the 2014 impact case studies demonstrated the profound value of research not just in the STEM disciplines but also in Social Sciences, Humanities, and Creative Arts. If, however, we look at this from a Birmingham perspective, in REF 2014 we underperformed our ambitions and expectations, not least because, though our best impact case studies were outstanding, there was too long a tail of weaker and less compelling case studies. We are determined to address this for REF 2021.

Planning is already well advanced. The recent appointment of Professor Heather Widdows as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Impact has given us skilled and inspirational leadership in this area. Heather, and Professor Tim Softley, are

supported now by a very substantial investment in professional services staff to support the identification, development, and crafting of impact case studies.

There still needs to be further work to identify the best impact case studies for some units of assessment. Where we have already identified outstanding candidates for impact case studies, work is well advanced to underpin those cases with the kind of supporting evidence which will be compelling to REF panels.

The importance of impact does mean that we will need to continue to think and operate differently. It is critical that colleagues who have outstanding impact case studies are appropriately recognised through our promotions and reward processes. We need to make full use of the resources that we have made available to support the development of impact. Nearer the time, we will need to make some tactical decisions about where some of those impact case studies are most appropriately returned, and in some cases how they are further strengthened by additional investment.

From the analysis that I have seen, I am persuaded that if we get our approach right we will have an outstanding return for REF 2021, which will both recognise the range and transformative impact of our university's research. All five of our colleges have outstanding stories to tell and these impact case studies, combined with outstanding outputs and the investment that we have made in the research environment, should ensure that our REF performance places us in the sector's research elite. In so doing, we will have again demonstrated the profound importance both of fundamental research and the effective translation of that research.

Interestingly, that was the vision of this university's founders, it is what makes a great research university in the twenty-first century, and it is what will underpin our future.

*Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Sir David Eastwood*

YOUR BUZZ

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Contact us
university-buzz@bham.ac.uk

Buzz online
buzz.bham.ac.uk

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Edited by Matthew Collins
internalcomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk

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Front cover image:
Professor Heather Widdows.

BIRMINGHAM GLOBAL

USA

UNIVERSITY HOSTS PRESTIGIOUS 'FULBRIGHT FORUM' FOR TOP AMERICAN ACADEMIC SCHOLARS

The University recently hosted the prestigious annual Fulbright Forum, featuring over 50 top American academic scholars here at the University of Birmingham.

During the event, 55 American 'Fulbrighters' had the chance to explore cultural and historical resources at the University. It was particularly special this year as the inaugural event celebrated the US-UK Commission's 70th anniversary.

The US-UK Fulbright Commission was founded by diplomatic treaty in 1948 to foster intercultural understanding between the United States of America and the UK through educational exchange.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood said: *'We are honoured to welcome Fulbright scholars to the University of Birmingham. We are a global university and our research creates impact around the world; I hope that every scholar will find their visit to Birmingham productive, insightful and thought-provoking.'*

Penny Egan CBE, Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission, said: *'We love working with the University of Birmingham and have more Fulbright partner awards*

with them than any other university in the UK. We are delighted to be bringing all our American Fulbrighters to experience their warm hospitality.'

The University's academics led sessions to engage and challenge the Fulbright scholars, including topics such as how cultural heritage and global engagement provide distinctive experiences in the global higher education landscape.

The University has also recently tendered for, and was successful in a bid, to host one of the Commission's popular summer Institutes for American undergraduates to experience all that Birmingham has to offer.

Applications for Fulbright US academic awards to undertake research and/or teaching in the UK will open in March. The Postgraduate Awards will open in April.

For more information on the Fulbright commission and available awards, please contact Catherine Lemon (International Relations) C.Lemon@bham.ac.uk.

INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION: YOUR UNIVERSITY NEEDS YOU!

As the University works to grow its position as a global university, an essential measure of this success is securing and maintaining a top 100 position in all the major international league tables. Whatever we think about league tables, they carry an inevitable influence when attracting the best staff, students and international research connections as well as research income.

Our position in the international league tables has remained largely static or dropped slightly over the past few years, despite some significant gains in several of the underlying indicators, including citations and international outlook.

Academic reputation, based on the responses to an online survey distributed to academics across the world by the league table providers, is a key indicator in the rankings and represents the biggest opportunity to improve our position.

A new International Reputation unit within External Relations is leading this work, supported by the Colleges and Professional Services.



Scholars at the Fulbright Forum

SHARE THE QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS SURVEY WITH YOUR INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

The International Reputation team will contact you in February with the link to the survey. Why not complete the survey for your own international research contacts/collaborators and then let them know, so that they can return the favour?

Join #TeamUoB for the Great Birmingham 10K

Whether you walk, jog or run, UBSport and DARO are encouraging everyone from across the University to join #TeamUoB for the Great Birmingham 10K on Sunday 6 May 2018.

By joining our team you'll receive a discounted race fee, a free race t-shirt as well as plenty of training advice. If you are new to running or a seasoned athlete, you will be joining hundreds on the start line supporting this year's appeal – 10,000 lives.

If you choose 10,000 lives as your charity you will be helping create 10,000 life-changing opportunities for 11–25 year olds across the region through the University's 10,000 Lives appeal. For example, if ten people each raised £100, that could provide an Access to Birmingham bursary, covering some of the costs for a student's first year of university, including travel and textbooks.

Ioana Chiva, who currently works in Careers Network, will be running for the appeal as part of TeamUoB.

'Support from a mentor when I was studying Law changed my life and helped me achieve my dream of training to become a solicitor,' she says. 'That's why I've committed to running the 10K. When you choose to run for the appeal, every step you take will help transform young lives for the better.'

To register for the 10K and for further information about fundraising for 10,000 Lives, visit www.sportandfitness.bham.ac.uk/great-birmingham-10k

**STEP FORWARD.
CHANGE 10,000 LIVES.**

Date for the diary

Vice-Chancellor's Open Forum

Tuesday 13 February,
12.30–1.30pm, The Bramall

Part Two of the Vice-Chancellor's interviews with Mark Leach, founder, Editor and CEO of Wonkhe, the higher education policy commentators. The interview will cover key issues facing the higher education sector and the University.

Birmingham Professional Forum

Friday 23 March,
11.00am–12.00noon, The Bramall

All staff are warmly invited to the forum, which is introduced by the Registrar and Secretary, Lee Sanders. The agenda will follow closer to the event.

Launch of the Technical Academy

The University recently launched its Technical Academy, designed to deliver the skills and career development essential to supporting those in technical roles across the University, both today and in the future.

The demand for highly skilled technical staff is increasing, and diverse and specialist technical skills are needed more than ever. A number of nationwide initiatives have been launched to respond to this, notably the HEFCE-funded Technical Development and Modernisation project and the Science Council's Technician Commitment, of which Birmingham is a founding signatory. The creation of a Technical Academy at the University of Birmingham firmly supports the national agenda.

Professor Tim Softley, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer said: *'Technical staff are perhaps some of the "unsung heroes" of our institution. Their skills and expertise enable the innovative teaching and pioneering research that takes place across campus and beyond. I hope that the inauguration of the Technical Academy is the first of many positive steps we will take in recognising and supporting the invaluable and dedicated work of technical colleagues at the University of Birmingham.'*

www.birmingham.ac.uk/tech-academy

BEAR TEAM WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Congratulations to Research Support's Birmingham Environment for Academic Research (BEAR) team, who have won two international awards for a High Performance Computing (HPC) project funded by the Medical Research Council.

The Cloud Infrastructure for Microbial Bioinformatics (CLIMB) project is a large OpenStack system distributed across four University sites, and supports over 200 research groups in the UK.

CLIMB was recognised in the annual



HPCwire Readers' and Editors' Choice Awards at the SuperComputing 2017 conference in Denver, winning awards for:

- Best Use of HPC in Life Sciences – for real-time analysis of Zika virus genomes; led by Professor Nick Loman, School of Biosciences
- Best HPC Collaboration (Academia Government/Industry) – for providing resources for projects that globally impact public health

CELEBRATING LGBT MONTH AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The beginning of the year is a busy time for most people on campus, but particularly so for the staff and students who are involved in LGBT History Month in February and International Women's Day on 8 March. These two events are part of the University's programme of events to celebrate the diversity that enriches our campus.



LGBT HISTORY MONTH

The LGBT History Month launch event began on Friday 2 February with a programme of talks, films and discussions. The University was delighted to host a roundtable event in partnership with Stonewall, which looked at how organisations can develop their global inclusion work.

The University is also working in partnership with the University of Birmingham School to host the MattandNaz Foundation, to deliver a series of events which explore sexual orientation, religious belief and coming out.

Professor Robin Mason, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) and Executive Lead for LGBT Equality, said: *'LGBT History Month is an important time for the University to demonstrate its strong support for transgender and sexual orientation equality. I have been extremely impressed by the way in which staff and students have come together to develop such an informative and interesting programme.'*

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The University's International Women's Day project this year will link up with the Arts & Science Festival, by exploring the festival theme of 'Stop/Start' from an equalities perspective, through a collaboration between Professor Joanne Duberley from Birmingham Business School, the Equalities Team and sketch-note artist Pen Mendonca.

The project aims to ask two questions that are particularly relevant to women's careers:

- What stops and starts your day?
- What stops and starts your career?

Before and during International Women's Day, Pen will work with groups of women across campus to answer these questions in graphic form. Pen's 'sketchnotes' will then inform a lecture by Joanne Duberley as part of the Arts & Science Festival.

Joanne explained: *'I have a particular interest in workplace inclusion and the lived experience of diversity. We know from initiatives such as Athena SWAN the importance of addressing the loss of women across the career pipeline.'*

I will be fascinated to see the answers to these questions and hope that this information will help the University in understanding and addressing barriers to progression.'

Professor Una Martin, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Equalities, explains why events such as these are such an important part of the University's Equality Agenda.

'Creating an inclusive environment in which each and every person is able to flourish is central to the University's core mission to be a global force in teaching and research.'

'Our equality events, such as LGBT History Month and International Women's Day, are a chance to bring these issues to life and remind us that equality is about people and is important to each and every one of us.'



More information on LGBT History Month and how to register for events can be found at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/events/lgbt-history-month/index.aspx and www.facebook.com/UoB.LGBTQ

TACKLING RACE INEQUALITIES

Birmingham is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse cities in the UK, with nearly half of its residents being Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals. This resonates with the University's global profile of students and staff coming from over 150 countries worldwide.

It is paramount for any leading global university like ours to attract and retain top talent. This can only be made possible if we nurture an environment for individuals from all backgrounds to thrive and excel. Such a culture of inclusivity is central to the University's core values. We were England's first civic university where students from all religions and backgrounds were accepted on an equal basis. We were first to appoint female professors at a UK university. And now, we are sending a clear message of our commitment on race equality by being one of the 36 member universities of the Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) Race Equality Charter.

The University has been a driving force in the higher education sector on race equality through our success in halving the attainment gap since 2010, and our partnerships within the sector as well as with the government, funding agencies, and community bodies. We are taking the next step by applying for the Race Equality Charter Bronze Award as a mechanism to develop inclusive strategies for staff and students of all races. A steering group, chaired by Professor Tim Jones, Provost and Vice-Principal, and Professor Kathy Armour, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), has been set up to oversee the application process and to develop an action plan to address issues revealed by the analysis of institutional data with the support of two sub-groups and a self-assessment team.

Professor Tim Jones said: *'Birmingham has been making an impact on people's lives for more than a century. We can only achieve our full potential by continuing to break the glass ceiling for individuals from all ethnic backgrounds.'*

Professor Kathy Armour added: *'Diversity is at the core of our University. It is in our diverse community of staff and students that knowledge, innovation, creativity and impact are developed.'*

Staff and students will be asked to provide feedback on their experience in race equality on campus and in local communities. Institutional-wide Race Equality Charter surveys and focus groups will be carried out in the next few months to capture opinions, which will inform the initiatives set out in the University's action plan for Bronze Award application in 2019. It is important that participation in these surveys and focus groups encompasses all sectors of the University community to ensure that we gain as much input and as many perspectives as possible. If you have queries about our Race Equality Charter award application, please contact the equality team via equality@contacts.bham.ac.uk



The Race Equality Charter has been set up to identify and address race inequalities in higher education. The Charter is underpinned by five key principles:

- That racism is part of everyday life and racial inequalities manifest themselves in everyday processes and behaviours
- That individuals from all ethnic backgrounds should benefit equally from the opportunities available to them
- That solutions to racial inequality should have long-term impact through institutional cultural change
- That those from minority backgrounds are not a homogenous group and such complexity must be recognised when exploring race equality
- That intersectional identities should be considered when discussing race equality

The University also runs a BAME staff network, led by volunteers from across the University. If you would like to get involved or be added to the BAME Staff Network mailing list please email bamestaff@contacts.bham.ac.uk or visit www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/bame to find out more.

RESEARCH [IMPACT]

BUZZ WOULD LIKE TO USE THESE 'RESEARCH IN FOCUS' PAGES TO HIGHLIGHT SOME EXAMPLES OF THE INSPIRATIONAL AND IMPACTFUL RESEARCH TAKING PLACE ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY.

SUPPORT FOR THE VICTIMS OF CHOLERA IN HAITI

We begin in Haiti, where Dr Nicolas Lemay-Hébert (School of Government and Society) is leading the support for the victims of cholera.

In 2010 a deadly cholera outbreak, which killed 9,000 people and sickened almost 1 million people, struck when Nepalese peacekeepers working for the United Nations (UN) Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) brought the infectious disease to the country. Dr Lemay-Hébert, along with Professor Rosa Freedman (Law, Reading), have worked with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and the UN to find a practical solution to end the stalemate around compensation and reparations, and they have been providing advocacy support for the people in Haiti in their fight for justice. They have organised a major workshop in Haiti in 2015, bringing together experts and former UN officials to design a framework that could help to resolve the issue, and they have received a follow-up grant to disseminate the findings in New York with representatives of UN member states.

In 2016, the UN finally acknowledged and apologised to the people of Haiti for the epidemic. The apology came after many years of silence from the UN, and was coupled with a promise to prevent future deaths and suffering and to remedy those that had occurred. But since then, the UN has done nothing to make good on its promises, in particular to consult with and remedy the victims. Dr Lemay-Hébert and Professor Freedman are currently working on practical solutions for compensating victims of cholera in Haiti.

COMBATTING EBOLA IN WEST AFRICA

Between 2014 and 2016, over 28,600 Ebola cases were reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Over 11,000 deaths were reported, making it the largest and most lethal Ebola outbreak ever seen.

Prior to the outbreak, Dr Nick Loman (School of Biosciences) and his PhD student, Josh Quick – in collaboration with Oxford Nanopore – contributed to the development of the MinION™ – a portable, real-time genomic surveillance device that allows for DNA sequencing to be performed and analysed in real-time.

In April 2015, Josh travelled to Conakry in Guinea, and, using MinION™, set up the DNA sequencing technology in the European Mobile Laboratory. They were able to identify the unique genetic sequence of the Ebola virus in patients within 24 hours and understand how cases were related and transmitted.

Results generated in the first ten days indicated that the persisting Ebola cases in Guinea belonged to two major lineages and confirmed that the virus was being spread across borders (from Sierra Leone into Guinea). Accurate identification of transmission chains meant that the sources of transmission of the virus could be identified and those involved in the management of the outbreak could set up quarantine centres. The technology provided genome sequencing information in real-time until the outbreak was officially declared to be over.

MAPPING THE UNDERWORLD

Historically, the world has responded to a growing population by building outwards and upwards.

With the global population expected to grow by 83 million every year until 2030, the world urgently needs to find ways to unlock the potential of underground space if we are to meet the needs of people whilst minimising environmental impacts and building resilience to climate change.

Our researchers are responding to this challenge by developing new technologies and processes which will allow us to more fully understand – and utilise – the world beneath our feet.

As Director of the UK's National Buried Infrastructure Facility, Professor Chris Rogers and his team at Birmingham have sensing technologies which allow engineers to accurately assess the location and condition of pipes and cables.

Professor Kai Bongs and his team are also pioneering the development of quantum gravity sensors. The technology works by detecting very slight changes in gravity at the atomic level, allowing us to map underground spaces far beyond the reach of current sensors.

By better understanding the world beneath our feet, urban planners and engineers around the world will be able to make more efficient use of land resources. Building underground could also help communities adapt to the challenges, creating infrastructure, homes and offices that can cope with extreme weather events.

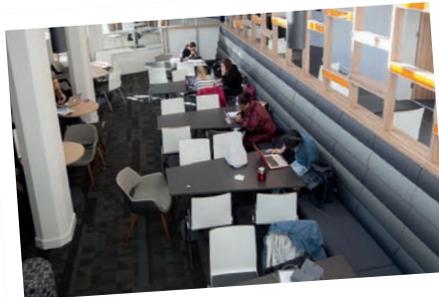
transforming OUR campus

New on campus

The brand new Harding Building officially opened its doors last month, which means that students now have access to a brand new 200+ seat study area, incorporating 30 PCs, eight bookable study rooms and printing and photocopying facilities. In addition, teaching is now taking place in the state-of-the-art interpreting suite and moot rooms.

The new cafeteria in the Education Building is now finished, offering enhanced facilities for all those who use the building.

The Business School's refurbished learning space is also now open to all, providing a refreshed area for students and staff.



School of Education

Pavilion

The Pavilion, attached to the new Bournbrook student residence, will provide a variety of facilities for students, staff and the public. There is a new Starbucks café, which has already opened there. In addition, a community hub, which will provide advice and meeting facilities for all Selly Oak residents is due to open soon. There will also be a dedicated sports bar, which will provide an additional social space for students participating in sporting activities.

Collaborative Teaching Laboratory (CTL)

With completion due in September this year, work on the CTL is progressing very well. The glass frontage has now been installed and the building is starting to take shape. However, those wishing to get a feel for what the three laboratories housed inside – e-lab, wet lab and dry lab – will be able to do so before September. A virtual reality environment has been produced and is available for use on smartphones and cardboard headsets.

Visit the website for information on how to access this:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/ctl

The Old Gym

Work has commenced at the Old Gym, which is being refurbished to provide enhanced teaching facilities and improved staff working facilities. This relatively small project is due to complete in December 2018.



Artist's impression of the new facilities

School of Engineering

Demolition of Chemistry West is due to begin very soon to make way for a new School of Engineering. The aim of the new building is to provide a home to many of the University's engineering disciplines. It will also house a new centre of excellence in rail innovation, bringing industry into the heart of our campus.

The building will provide different and more flexible ways of working that will use the space to its best advantage. It will also host a world-class centre of excellence in rail in partnership with industry, focusing on digital systems. Funded as part of the newly created UK Railway Research and Innovation Network (UKRRIN), it will focus on railway control and simulation, data integration and cybersecurity, condition monitoring and sensing, and improved methods for technology introduction.

The team behind the development are engaging with staff and students through a variety of means, and will continue to do so throughout the work until its completion in 2020.



Artist's impression of the School of Engineering labelled 'DSIC entrance'

The Frankland Building

Refurbishment of Frankland is due to start in spring 2018. This will involve provision of more academic offices, teaching spaces and music practice rooms. The works will improve the space and accessibility to and around the building and will reduce the energy needed to run it. The Frankland Building will be complete and ready for occupation in summer 2019.

The Green Heart

The first wave of carefully selected mature trees were lowered into the Green Heart at the end of 2017, with the first one ceremonially planted by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Green Heart will create a sustainable, natural and environmentally friendly landscape; both for people and wildlife. Not only will the Green Heart enhance the University's ecology, but the parkland will provide a unique space for performances, socialising, meeting and studying, while opening up views across the whole campus, as envisaged in the 1920s.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood, said: *'It is something of a formidable sight to see these mature trees appearing in our landscape. I am honoured to plant one of the first of these specimens, which have been carefully chosen by our arboriculturalist. It will be through trees such as these that we will see the transition of seasons in our Green Heart for generations to come.'*

Ellie Keiller, President of the Guild of Students, said: *'Environmental concerns are, increasingly, a high agenda item for students at Birmingham. This is why I'm delighted to be here, to witness the early stages of the Green Heart project, our new dedicated natural and sustainable space for students, staff and other visitors to our beautiful campus.'*

In the coming weeks, work on the side of University Square closest to the Arts Building will complete, and that first part of the Green Heart will be opened up for use by staff, students and the public. The next phase will see the opposite side of University Square, closest to Staff House and University Centre, cordoned off for development.



Tree planting in the Green Heart

ARTS & SCIENCE FESTIVAL



Monday 12–Sunday 18 March 2018

The University of Birmingham's Arts & Science Festival is back for its sixth edition – celebrating research, culture and collaboration across campus and beyond. Join leading artists and academics as they respond to this year's theme, '**Stop/Start!**', for a diverse programme exploring time, movement, migration, attitudes, behaviours, life, death and a whole lot more...

Ever wanted to learn about the oldest known advanced scientific instrument? Or the geological impact of volcanic eruptions? Festival talks provide the opportunity to learn about an array of topics: enter the world of digital dinosaurs at the Lapworth; hear about artist Charlotte Jarvis's approach to collaborating with scientists; and unearth creepy crawlies of the 1600s through the Barber collection.

Arts & Science Festival returns to the Electric Cinema in 2018 with sci-fi thrillers *Timecrimes* (2007) and *Flatliners* (1990) introduced by University of Birmingham academics, as well as the hilarious Trash Film Night, featuring the brilliantly terrible film *Hard Ticket to Hawaii* (1987). Other screening highlights include an evening with Flatpack Film Festival, on campus for one night only with a collection of stop motion shorts curated for the festival. We're also delighted to present a screening of powerful documentary *Unrest* (2017), which charts the journey of 28-year-old Jennifer Brea who upon being diagnosed with ME (commonly known as chronic fatigue syndrome) turns the camera on herself and in the process

discovers a hidden world of millions confined to their homes and bedrooms.

There's plenty to explore on campus in between events; exhibitions explore connections between the world of the artist and the physicist, anatomy and art. Also on campus is *Black Country Lungs*, a unique collaboration between community arts company Multistory, Dutch photographer Corinne Noordenbos, and people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

If you're keen to get stuck in, workshops provide opportunities to experiment with visualisation and mark-making to explore the intriguing connections between art and science. You can also play with the technologies that are helping to reshape art and its production.

Get moving and explore campus with through guided walks including SOUNDwalks, a new series inviting you to tune in to hidden audio worlds. For family fun, join heroine Oolick on an extraordinary journey into a dazzling Arctic world as part of *Where's My Igloo Gone?*, an immersive performance presented by The Bone Ensemble.



Arts & Science Festival explores art, science and the spaces between.
View the full programme at www.artsandsciencefestival.co.uk

Image credits: top right to bottom right:
Charlotte Jarvis, Greg Milner Photography, Pamela Raith Photography, Jason Frank Rothenberg

Scottish colour to brighten the Barber

S J Peploe, Luxembourg Gardens, c.1910

It's all about colour at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts this spring in the gallery's lead exhibition, *The Rhythm of Light: Scottish Colourists from the Fleming Collection*. We asked the Barber's Assistant Curator, Helen Cobby, to tell us more about this gloriously appealing show.

Who were the Scottish Colourists?

The Colourists were a group of four early 20th-century Scottish artists, SJ Peploe (1871–1935), JD Fergusson (1874–1961), FCB Cadell (1883–1937) and Leslie Hunter (1877–1931). They never functioned as a formal group, and only exhibited together three times, but they were friends and each reacted against the sentimental realism typical of the art produced in Scotland.

Which artists influenced the Colourists?

All four were influenced by the earlier generation of French Realists (particularly Édouard Manet), Impressionists and Post-Impressionists (including Gauguin and Cézanne), as well as by their contemporaries, Matisse, Derain and the other Fauves – the 'wild beasts' – of the early 1900s. The Colourists were inspired by the Fauves' use of hot, dissonant hues and decorative colour blocks, evident in many of the paintings in the exhibition, including *Roses* by Peploe, 1919, *La Terrasse, Dinard*, 1931, by Fergusson, and *Luxembourg Gardens*, from about 1910, by Peploe – my favourite work in the show.

What characterises their work?

Still life and landscapes are characteristic subjects. To depict many of their later Scottish scenes, they applied the lively brushstrokes and strong colour of their French counterparts. They were each struck by the quality of light in the Côte d'Azur, too. It became a great motivation for their trips to France. They really were preoccupied with colour and light, exploiting them to communicate form, atmosphere, climate and feeling, and reinvigorating Scottish painting as a whole. The idea of 'rhythm' is also characteristic of their attitudes towards creativity. 'Rhythm' was regarded not only as formal and stylistic innovation, but also an exploration of essential, underlying orders or patterns in nature and the modern world.

What will we like about them?

The Colourists' bright colours and thick, energetic brushstrokes should make for a beautiful and uplifting exhibition. A lot of the paintings are relatively small (they were created for a domestic market), which should enable close, personal encounters with the works. Finally, the artists' direct links with Europe and the inclusive, creative society in which they lived and established for themselves is important and inspiring for our own divided and uncertain times.

Why haven't we heard of them before?

The Colourists are very popular in Scotland, where there are frequent exhibitions of their work, perhaps partly due to local interest, patriotic tendencies and accessibility to their work. Many Colourist paintings were owned by private Scottish collectors or made their way into institutions like the Glasgow Art Galleries and Museums –

but it's true, they're less known south of the border. The history of art and exhibitions sometime overlooks certain artists, groups or periods. This exhibition is the first to show the Colourists as a group in the West Midlands.

Where do the works come from?

The Fleming Collection, owned by the Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation, based in London, which holds the world's finest private collection of Scottish art. The paintings were acquired to decorate the London offices of the investment bank Robert Flemings & Co. In 2000, when the bank was sold, ownership was transferred to the Foundation, which aims to be a 'museum without walls', bringing Scottish art to audiences outside Scotland.



Leslie Hunter, Peonies in a Chinese Vase

The Rhythm of Light: Scottish Colourists from the Fleming Collection runs at the Barber Institute from 16 February to 13 May. Enjoy a special evening view of the show and lecture on Scottish Art by artist Lachlan Goudie, writer and presenter of BBC Four's *The Story of Scottish Painting* and judge for BBC Two's *The Big Painting Challenge*, on Thursday 8 March, 5.30–7.15pm. Tickets are £5, £4 for Barber Association members. More information: www.barber.org.uk



BRITISH TRANSPLANT GAMES 2018

TRANSFORMING REAL LIVES

Needing an organ donor sounds like a bad dream. For Nicola Cartwright, Deputy Hospitality Manager for Hospitality and Accommodation Services, it was reality.

Nicola was just 24 when she was diagnosed with heart failure – due to myocarditis, likely caused by a virus. Remarkably, she continued to work for a further four years, helped by medication, before her struggles with tiredness and her declining heart function placed her on the donor register. The call from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital came just four days later, in the early evening as she was climbing into bed, exhausted after a day's work: *'we've got a heart for you'*. Unfortunately, that heart was not suitable for transplant, but another became available the very next day.

Nicola received her heart transplant on 15 April 2007, in a five-hour operation. *'Until I was on the table it didn't feel real,'* she says today. By coincidence, a BBC team were there filming a documentary – meaning she's had the unique experience of actually seeing her own operation. *'My old heart was massive and yellow; the new one was little and pink. Every time I watch it I cry, because my Mum was so worried.'*

She was told she was the fastest transplant patient to be discharged from the Queen Elizabeth at that time, and went home to recover after only ten days. Nicola puts this down to the quality of care she received: *'The hospital was amazing. Critical care was brilliant.'*

Although she takes 30 tablets every day, and will always need to take medication, she's in good health and able to live a fully active life.

Now Nicola is looking forward to taking part in the 5k Donor Run at the Westfield Health British Transplant Games in August 2018: a spectacular weekend of competitive sport. Participants range from young children to older athletes, all of whom have received organ transplants.

Hospitality and Accommodation Services (HAS) will offer a range of services to the teams and their supporters from 2–5 August, starting with a party night with live music at the Vale after Thursday's city centre Opening Ceremony.

University of Birmingham Sport & Fitness are providing a range of sports facilities, using the 50m pool, indoor arena, squash courts, athletics track and pitches. The Vale will be transformed into a 'Games Village', giving teams easy access to all the events on campus. Participants and their supporters will enjoy all the usual food and drink offers of the Vale with extended opening hours, plus

a marquee with a curry hut, additional bar and a games area. After the ever-popular Darts Night on Friday, a festival atmosphere kicks off on Saturday for the Donor Run, with music, ice-cream, and big-screen movies for families.

At Bournbrook Pavilion, Brook's Sports Bar & Kitchen will offer freshly cooked meals and drinks, while outdoor street food stalls will provide a wide range of snack and meal options all weekend. Packed lunch options will also be provided for those staying at the Games Village.

With attendance expected to be well over 3,000 people, it's sure to be a thrilling weekend – the perfect preparation for the 2019 World Transplant Games.

The British Transplant Games team hope to see many more sign up to the organ donor register thanks to the awareness raised from the games. The UK performs more transplants than any other European country, and recently celebrated the 5,000th liver transplant. However, organ donors remain desperately needed, especially from within the BAME community.

It's not only organs that can be donated. Student group Birmingham Marrow is part of national charity Marrow, who work alongside Anthony Nolan to recruit people to the bone marrow donor register. These essential stem cell and bone marrow donations help save lives from blood cancer. If you give blood and are between 17 and 40 years of age, you can join the register when you next donate – or contact Birmingham Marrows to be part of their fundraising work: <http://uobmedsoc.com/marrow>

If you'd like to get more involved, there will be plenty of volunteering opportunities at the Games. The 5k Donor Run is open to the general public as well as transplant recipients and their families. And, of course, you can join the organ donation register – and take the vital step of letting your friends and family know about your decision, too.

'A lot of people think it's tempting fate,' says Nicola. *'But I wouldn't be here without it.'*

Join the register today at www.britishtransplantgames.co.uk



UNIVERSITY..... APPRENTICESHIPS



CASE STUDY:

The University is now in its second year of successfully welcoming apprentices into a variety of departments. Apprenticeships are vital to support succession planning, skills development and the University's civic duty.

The University now operates two types of apprenticeship scheme:

New Entrant Scheme: Designed for those who are new to the workforce, supporting entry into the University.

Existing staff scheme: Providing apprenticeship training opportunities (often at a higher level) for existing staff.

The Pilot Scheme demonstrated that apprenticeships are becoming a valuable method of recruiting and developing staff. 75% of apprentices completed their course; 92% of those moved into employment. This is well above the national average. Departments that have successfully engaged with apprenticeships include:

- IT
- Hospitality and Accommodation Services
- Estates, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
- College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
- External Relations

The University will launch recruitment for the September 2018 cohort during National Apprenticeship Week, which starts on Monday 5 March.

For any enquiries about how apprenticeships can benefit your department please contact:
Apprenticeship Coordinator
Caleb Wright on
C.wright.2@bham.ac.uk

THE APPRENTICESHIP EXPERIENCE

Buzz met with Administrative Assistant Alex Wright, who originally came to the University as an apprentice, and the person who recruited and managed her through the course, College of Medical and Dental Sciences' (MDS) Head of Administration, Robbie Roberts.

WHAT MADE YOU TAKE PART?

Robbie: Our motivations were many. We sensed that apprenticeship schemes were going to expand and it was an opportunity to get on board with an exciting and new initiative early on. Moreover though, those involved in the College were genuinely interested in recruiting new talent to the University.

Alex: I was coming close to finishing my studies at college and was seeking an apprenticeship. I knew I want to do business admin so when I saw there were a few advertised at the University, I jumped at the chance to be involved.

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING/HAVING AN APPRENTICE?

Alex: The best thing about being an apprentice is gaining a qualification whilst getting paid to work at such a great university. I have supported so many large projects that are college based and University wide that have given me lots of exposure to other teams, processes and people from other colleges and areas at the University. Every project I supported has helped with getting my qualification.

Robbie: It's less about the best thing about an apprentice per se and more about the specific person we appointed! Alex settled in very quickly and was eager to learn, and absorb as much as she could about the College and the projects we wanted her to get involved in. As she became more experienced she took on more and more tasks and responsibilities. If there is a succinct way of answering this question, the best thing was being able to watch Alex develop extremely rapidly over the course of the year.

WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU LEARNT DURING THE PROCESS?

Alex: The most important thing I learnt during the process is to always ask questions, there is no such thing as a silly question.

Robbie: I learnt that the apprenticeship scheme is every bit as relevant in business administration roles as it is for any other type of role. It was also refreshing to be reminded of how someone starting in their career arrives almost as a blank canvas and learns about the various directions their career could take. Even now her apprenticeship has finished and she is now a full-time member of staff, she still has many options ahead of her.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHERS WHO WANTED TO GET INVOLVED?

Alex: Do it! You will not regret it!!

Robbie: Do it. But invest sufficient time in the process and with your apprentice – they will need additional support particularly at the beginning and time must be created to do this properly.

ALEX, WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW AND WHERE DO YOU PLAN TO GO NEXT?

Alex: I have finished my apprenticeship and I am now an Administrative Assistant for the Executive Office in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences and I am thinking about going down the marketing route.

CAMPUS CURIOSITIES

What is it?

Hans Schwarz's Certificate of Registration, 1939

Where is it?

Research and Cultural Collections Study Centre,
32 Pritchatts Road, (viewable by appointment,
please email rcc@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Artist Hans Schwarz escaped from Nazi-occupied Austria in 1939 and was brought to Bournville, Birmingham by Kindertransport. This scheme brought thousands of refugee Jewish children to Great Britain between 1938 and 1940. Aged only 16, Schwarz would never see his family again. Whilst he rebuilt his life in Birmingham – marrying a local woman called Lena, starting his own family and attending art school, Schwarz's early experiences of upheaval must have affected him deeply. Like many others who lived through such traumatic events at this time, Schwarz rarely spoke of his experiences and it is only through his archive and his prolific artistic output that we are able to trace the complex legacies of displacement, migration and identity trauma. Schwarz's Certificate of Registration, pictured here, is a prime document highlighting the changing nature of migrant status; from child refugee escaping Nazi oppression in 1939, to interned



enemy alien in 1940, and finally to British Citizen in 1947. The Schwarz collection highlights an historical past, at once unique and universal, shedding light on an individual refugee experience as well as allowing for new understandings of the multifaceted intersections between nationality, identity, trauma and concepts of home.

Learn more

On Wednesday 14 March, as part of Arts & Science Festival 2018, Research and Cultural Collections' Researcher in Residence, Ellie Hill, will deliver a talk exploring issues of displacement, acculturation and identity trauma in the art and archive of Hans Schwarz. For details and to book please see the festival programme at artsandsciencefestival.co.uk/

Chancellor's column



Lord Bilimoria is the founder and chairman of Cobra Beer, Chancellor of the University of Birmingham and the founding Chairman of the UK India Business Council.

On 29 January, the University of Birmingham and India celebrated another development in their story with the launch of the India Institute.

Through a supportive network for academics, research councils, institutions, government offices and commercial partners, the Institute will help to deliver impactful research, create innovative education initiatives and extend influences across the globe.

The University has had a long relationship with India, starting in 1909 when the first group of Indian students attended the University. My grandfather, Squadron Leader J. D. Italia, graduated from the University in Commerce, starting as an undergraduate in 1928. My mother Yasmin followed in 1955. I came to Britain from India as a 19-year-old student in the early 1980s – the third generation in my family to be educated in the UK – where I knew I would receive a world-class education.

The University now has over 2,000 Indian alumni and has collaborated on numerous successful research projects, including a pivotal investigation into the causes of the three most common cancers in women in the Punjab region.

Britain and India have a longstanding and close relationship, with India an emerging global economic superpower. India remains home to Britain's largest trade mission, while over 700 Indian-owned businesses are thriving in the UK, employing more than 100,000 people – many of them in Birmingham and the West Midlands region.

The 1.5 million strong Indian diaspora in the UK is the largest ethnic minority community in the country, and is succeeding in every field.

It is wonderful that the University of Birmingham is taking this important step in creating the India Institute at this critical time when there is enormous potential in every aspect between our two great countries.



Our regular feature gives *Buzz* readers a quick tour of the latest University news hitting the headlines and activity among our online community.

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

in the news...

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

The University's profile in the Middle East was raised with the appointment of Professor Glyn Watson as our first Provost at the University of Birmingham Dubai – covered by *The National* and other UAE news outlets. *Education Journal* (UAE) carried a lengthy interview on teacher training with our strategic director of overseas programmes Dr Christine Szwed, whilst Ben Bailey, our new Director of Operations in Dubai, was interviewed with Lord Willetts on Dubai Eye FM.

Media outlets in the Middle East reported the Birmingham Qur'an digital exhibition's opening in Abu Dhabi. *The National* (UAE) ran an extended feature which focused on Sue Worrall and Sarah Kilroy from the Cadbury Research Library and how the University conserves the holy manuscript.

Research by Professor David Grainger, Professor Laura Piddock and Dr Prateek Sharma, discovering a new mechanism by which bacteria become resistant to antibiotics, was reported on by national, international and science media including *The Independent*, *Yahoo! News*, *India Blooms* and *The Conversation*.

Mr Prashant Patel appeared on the BBC Two documentary *Surgeons: At the Edge of Life*, discussing a clinical trial seeking a new experimental approach to treat prostate cancer.

The findings of Dr Tom Chothia, Dr Flavio Garcia and PhD candidate Chris McMahon Stone which highlighted a security flaw in a number of banking apps featured in *The Telegraph*, *Mail Online*, *Press Association* and a number of technology and trade outlets.

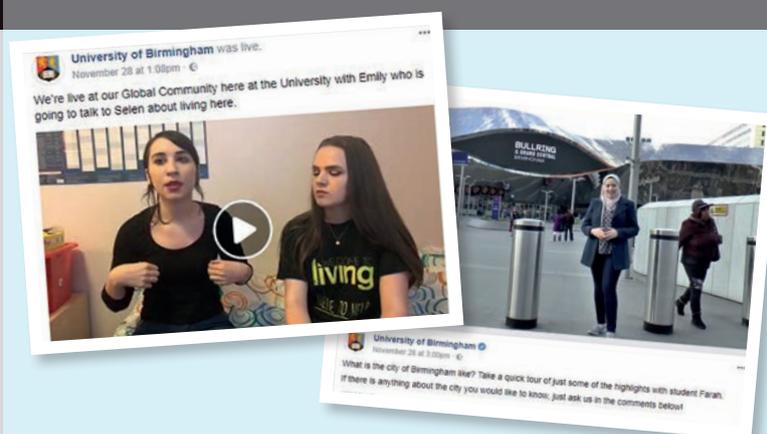
Birmingham's computing expertise was highlighted with Dr Flavio Garcia commenting on car key security for BBC Radio 5, whilst Ian Batten was quoted on computer chip weaknesses in a range of international publications including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Gulf News* (UAE), *Indian Express* and the *Australian Financial Review*.

Research led by Damien Needle into the food cleaning behaviours of gorillas was covered by the *Daily Mail* and a number of international publications spanning the globe, from Mexico to China.

Professor Raquel Ortega-Argilés's research into the economic impact of Brexit on UK regions was picked up by *The Guardian*, *New Statesman*, *Evening Standard*, *Yahoo! UK* and Ireland, *Metro*, *Huffington Post*, and ITV Central.

Join the UoB online community

Follow us on Twitter at @unibirmingham. If you use social media at work and would like to increase your visibility, find out more at: intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/socialmediaguidelines



feeling social...

During November we hosted our first ever Virtual Open Day for international students, exclusively on Facebook.

The aim of the day was to showcase what it's like to live and study in the UK and give prospective students that UoB open day experience from the comfort of their own home.

Hosting it on Facebook meant we could be more dynamic with the content; it would naturally appear in people's feeds and visitors could chat directly with staff at the University, either on the posts or via Facebook Messenger.

Posts included Facebook Live, videos of the city centre, information about the Careers Network, accommodation and how to apply – many of them featuring our international students themselves.

The project was a cross-University collaboration, with teams from the Colleges, Living, International, Careers Network and Marketing all helping out, and it ran from 8.00am until 11.00pm on the day.

While the content was focused on Facebook, supporting messages were also posted across our social media channels, including Instagram Stories and Twitter. The day was a huge success: overall impressions reached nearly 850,000 – nearly triple that of an average day. The reach was nearly 320,000 people (compared with an average of 180,000).

The event also saw our Facebook page follows jump by 1,633 people and nearly 1,300 one-to-one conversations were had on Messenger.

Heather Widdows ...in my own words



Professor Heather Widdows is the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Impact and the John Ferguson Professor of Global Ethics.

I grew up in Halifax in the north of England among the hills. Predictably, my favourite book is *Wuthering Heights*. Aged 18, I took a 'year out', much of which I spent in Tanzania. Pre-Internet it took six weeks for the post to arrive and the nearest phone was in a town 60 miles away on unsurfaced roads. I then spent nine years at the University in Edinburgh specialising in Moral Philosophy, particularly virtue theory. After that I took the first job I was offered in genetic and reproductive ethics at Imperial College London. Having never done anything remotely 'applied', this was a shock to the system. I came to Birmingham as a research fellow in 2000 to work in the Centre for the Study of Global Ethics, then a new initiative. In 2009, I was awarded a Chair, and I am the John Ferguson Professor of Global Ethics, in the Department of Philosophy. My new role as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Impact started in November 2017, and I'm currently working my way around the colleges.

The impact agenda is partly about looking towards the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021), but more broadly it's about making a difference 'out there', and making people's lives better. It is also about responding to the changing academic climate where 'good academics' are those who change theoretical frameworks, write great papers and have impact.

Impact is something that all research should have, to someone, at some point in time; not necessarily foreseeable or immediately. If research never changes how we think, what we do or how we are, it is not research that matters. At Birmingham, we've always done research that matters, so in many ways impact is nothing new – we just need to use this agenda to showcase what we do.

Some people may be anxious about a conflict between impact and what some call 'blue skies' thinking. I think they are complementary. Academic curiosity pushes the boundaries of knowledge and often unearths more questions than answers. For many projects, real-world application isn't immediately obvious – nor should it be – but if it changes the debate and asks and answers important questions it does and will matter. Some impact is predictable within a short

timeframe, others are not. We need to keep track, look back and recognise the impact that past research has had, and forward as our ideas and findings reverberate.

Similarly, there was, historically, apprehension about the impact agenda in areas like philosophy, where I work. However, the last REF proved that philosophers have significant real-world impact, shaping policy and changing society. Today the big research grants are awarded for multidisciplinary projects and collaborative research, making impact something to be embedded into our projects and plans.

This changing funding context is part and parcel of an increasingly integrated, globalised world, where funding is driven by the need to respond to big global challenges: pandemics, climate change and the digital revolution. Silo working is not going to find solutions. In my area, global ethics, the only way I can produce relevant research that is realistic and well-informed is by collaborating with people in other disciplines and with organisations outside of higher education.

Birmingham is in a really strong position to contribute to addressing contemporary challenges and global dilemmas. We have a breadth of disciplines that few universities can match and a longstanding commitment to working 'in the world' as a hub of research in the region, but also as a global university with global connections. Core initiatives such as Centenary Square and the Institute of Global Development (IGD) will help strengthen our connections and engagement.

So much exciting research is happening in colleges and in the spaces between colleges. In every unit of assessment we have the potential to dramatically improve our REF score and to help establish Birmingham as a place that is known for exemplary, impactful research. We as academics need to be better at telling our stories to demonstrate how what we do impacts on people's lives and the difference we make to society. What we do is really important and we should be proud of it.

I'm really enjoying my latest research, the 'Beauty Demands' project (www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/beauty/index.aspx). In a visual, virtual world, communication is increasingly done through images. It's changing who we are, how we understand ourselves and what we think matters. I'm looking across the beauty spectrum, from makeup to cosmetic surgery, and how it's changing our value framework. The project brings together scholars, practitioners and policy-makers to consider the changing requirements of beauty. It is collaborative, multidisciplinary, aims to change laws and practices, and above all it allows me to show off my shoes... ;

