



February/March 2015

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Painting
a picture



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood

Vice-Chancellor's *view*

Most people over Christmas either eat too much or drink too much. In my case I probably had too much of Research Assessment.

As well as the results of the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) in late December, in the first week of January I was in Hong Kong dealing with the final stages of their Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Results of this will be published by the end of the month. Dealing with two research assessments in the space of three weeks is probably

a cruel and unusual punishment!

Research Assessment has loomed large in my own academic career. As a historian I was involved in the RAEs from 1989, the first of the modern style Research Assessments. After both the 1996 and 2001 RAEs I was a member of the committees which reviewed and to some extent reshaped the RAEs. In 2006 I prevented the abolition of the RAE, and with it the dual support system, and in 2008 as Chief Executive of the Funding Council I ran the RAE.

I am not so naïve as to believe that the RAE or REF should be loved; it is, however, important that research assessment is understood.

The genesis of Research Assessment in the 1980s was an attempt to create the evidence base which would prevent the then Thatcher government from dramatically reducing research funding to universities. In this the RAEs were extraordinarily successful. Funding was stabilised in the 1980s and early 1990s and, under New Labour, the RAEs played a key role in making the case for a doubling of investment in the research base. Without the evidence of the RAEs there is no doubt that the sustained increase in research investment which we saw in the first decade of the century would not have happened.

There is a price to pay for the public funding of research, and a very legitimate concern on the part of government that universities should be accountable for the very substantial investment which the public makes in research in universities. The RAE is part of this accountability mechanism.

It is also part of the way in which the sector makes the case to government for research funding. To achieve this the exercise has, from time to time, to be reshaped. For example, in 2008/9 the Treasury insisted that the next Research Assessment (the REF of 2014) had a mechanism for measuring research impact. Without this, dual support again would have collapsed. Impact case studies were the mechanism through which we met that Treasury requirement.

The REF also serves a critical purpose in determining the distribution of QR

(Quality Research Funding). As a mode of distributing research funding it is extraordinarily cost-effective. The total cost of the 2008 RAE, for example, including the costs borne by institutions amounted to about 0.6% of the funding that was distributed over the RAE cycle. No other mechanism for distributing research funding is anything like as cost-effective as this.

Nobody suggests that the REF is unproblematic, nor that it cannot be reformed and refined. It is, however, a necessary part of the research funding and evaluation landscape and critical to the future of the dual support system. The dual support system, which divides the public funding of research between the Funding Councils and the Research Councils has produced a research base in UK universities which is more cost-effective than any competitor system.

Given this success, it is one of the peculiarities of the British that we keep re-examining it! When Alan Langlands took over from me as Chief Executive of the Funding Council I said to him that he would have to defend dual support every two months. When Alan retired from the Funding Council he said publicly that I had misled him, and that he had to defend it every two weeks! We would save a great deal of time and column inches if we simply accepted that this is a system that works well and focused on making it work still better.

We should, therefore, anticipate a REF around 2020 and the planning for this begins now.

At Birmingham we are embarked on a ten-year strategy to transform our research performance. This was always an avowedly two-REF cycle strategy. In December we had the results of the 2014 REF. There were some stunning successes.

On sheer quality our School of History is the best in the country. The results in Philosophy, Theology and Religion, Sport Exercise, and Psychology were stunning. The transformation in quality of outputs in Biosciences was remarkable. The School of Education has re-established itself as one of the leading centres for Education Research in the UK. All colleges had

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Front cover image: Christopher Mills, Technical Assistant at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts

results which were outstanding in some units of assessment or parts of them.

Taken overall the University held station in this REF. The percentage of 4* publication, though significantly higher than in 2008, was disappointing. When we analysed the overall results, the University is enormously strong in 3* research and needs, as a matter of priority, to translate a significant portion of that 3* into 4* research for 2020.

We also did not score as well as we should have done in impact. Chemical Engineering had a stunning result with 100 per cent of its impact at 4*. Elsewhere we probably told the story of our research impact in ways which were less compelling or less well evidenced than they might have been. This, too, is an area that we will need to strengthen for REF 2020.

In evaluating the REF 2014 results we should note that in terms of the quality of outputs, the REF is a judgement on the position of the University in 2012/13. As far as impact case studies are concerned, much of this reflects research which was undertaken in the University in the previous decade. In short, there are important lags here, and the University is more strongly placed now than it was at the REF census date.

Nevertheless, the REF tells a story of the leading half dozen universities pulling away from the rest of the pack. This reflects the results of the concentration of research funding and the particular advantages that the leading universities in London and the 'Golden Triangle' have enjoyed. It is pointless us protesting against this, we have to compete.

We are now well-advanced in developing our strategy for REF 2020. This, I am confident, will build on the result of REF 2014 and will see the University of Birmingham making very substantial strides in the next REF. To achieve this we will need to continue our investment in outstanding early-career researchers, mentor those colleagues to produce 4* outputs, and with them and others to continue to animate the intellectual environment of the University.

We have the resource and the determination to use our financial strength

to recruit outstanding individuals and groups, to invest in the areas of excellence which already thrive in the University, and to continue to enhance the research as well as the educational environment of the University.

Alongside these investments there will need to be important reconfigurations. Work is well-advanced in MDS to develop a structure which will build on the recommendations of the Life Sciences Review. I sense very considerable excitement in MDS, and a confidence that the new structures will enable us to deliver still greater research excellence. Similar reconfigurations will take place within some other colleges.

This is not simply restructuring for restructuring's sake, but a way of enhancing our ability to compete at the highest level. We know from the experience in the College of Arts and Law that restructuring works and can deliver outstanding results in short order.

Our research ambition is not, and must not, simply be focused on the REF of 2020. We have a parallel strategy to enhance our research grant income which should see us with research grant income in excess of £160m by 2016. No one should mistake the central purpose of our research strategy. This is not about chasing rankings, it is not about enhancing our league table position.

It is designed, rather, to do two things. It is designed to enhance our position and reputation as a leading centre for research, as a place of discovery and research translation, and as a university characterised by intellectual excitement.

It is also designed to ensure that we compete for the funding which is essential to enabling us to achieve our research ambitions.

By 2020 the number of well-funded, comprehensive research universities will, by one means or another, be reduced still further. Birmingham must, can, and will be amongst that group. **We are, I am confident, moving into a truly exciting, and richly challenging, period in our University's history.**

*Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Sir David Eastwood*



The Edward Cadbury Lectures 2015

The School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion is pleased to invite all staff, students, alumni and members of the public to this year's Cadbury Lecture series between 16–21 March.

The theme is 'God Over All' and includes a series of lectures by Professor William Lane Craig, Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology and Professor of Philosophy at Houston Baptist University. The events are free and open to all but registration is required as a limited number of seats are available.

Learn more www.birmingham.ac.uk/cadburylectures

Dates for the diary

Vice-Chancellor's Open Forum

Wednesday 11 February

12.30–1.30pm, Elgar Concert Hall
Bramall Music Building

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood, will be interviewed by the BBC's award-winning Education Correspondent Sean Coughlan, on key issues facing the higher education sector and the University. All staff are encouraged to attend and will have the opportunity to ask questions during the forum.

Birmingham Professional Forum

Thursday 2 April, 2.00–3.00pm

Elgar Concert Hall
Bramall Music Building

This event is for all Professional Services colleagues (administrative, support and technical staff) from across the University. Introduced by the Registrar and Secretary, Lee Sanders, the forum is a great opportunity to hear from colleagues on a wide range of topical subjects for both staff and the University.

BIRMINGHAM GLOBAL INDIA

FORGING LASTING COLLABORATIONS WITH INDIA

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood, and the Chancellor, Lord Bilimoria, accompanied a ministerial delegation to New Delhi in November 2014, to underline the University's commitment to forging closer ties with India.

The visit, headed by Universities Minister Greg Clark, involved more than 20 senior representatives of the UK higher education sector and was aimed at promoting stronger and deeper partnerships between the two nations. It is hoped the delegation will not only boost student recruitment from India but also bolster research, teaching and business collaborations. The delegation attended the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Higher Education Summit as well as an event hosted by the Indian Government Minister Smriti Zubin Irani. In addition to the official ministerial programme a number of bilateral meetings, a business engagement event and a

reception for alumni took place. The press team also generated significant coverage of the visit in the Indian press and at home in the UK.

The University's connection to India spans more than a century, welcoming the first Indian students to our campus in 1909 to study for degrees in mining and commerce. Since then we have provided education to more than 1,300 Indian alumni, including the late author Dr U R Ananthamurthy, who was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize 2013, and Indian Cabinet Secretary Ajit Kumar Seth and Dr Alwyn Didar Singh, Secretary General of FICCI.

In 2009 the University opened an office in New Delhi and India continues to be an important region for academic engagement and student recruitment for the University. The University is committed to continuing to build long-term, mutually beneficial, academic-to-academic engagement, key institutional partnerships and stakeholder relations, which will lead to increased staff and student mobility, education innovation and teaching partnerships, and enhanced research collaboration.

The University has a range of research and teaching partnerships with India; highlights are presented below.

- **Clinicians are studying** the salt intake of Indian adults as part of an international research team led by the Public Health Foundation of India. The research will provide vital new data to aid the development of a national salt reduction strategy. India has a diverse dietary culture where salt is used extensively but up-to-date figures on population salt consumption are very limited.
- **The University is working with** the University of Delhi and Yale University to support the development of a pioneering global justice programme in India. The Nyaya Global Justice Programme at the University of Delhi will be a major intellectual hub for the study of international ethical questions, which have strong implications for India and neighbouring countries.
- **The School of Physics and Astronomy** and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Pune are collaborating in joint curriculum development, computer-based learning and experimental tool design, and knowledge transfer in the area of ultra-cold atoms. The partnership is paving the way for students to acquire the highly developed experimental and theoretical skills and knowledge of cutting-edge technologies required for research in this discipline, and aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry in this field.



The Chancellor, Lord Bilimoria (left, image 1) and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood (centre, image 2) at the University's Business Engagement event



Peter Clack, Director of International Relations (second from right), greets potential collaborators in New Delhi

The Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor were joined on the trip by a team of staff from across the University. *Buzz* asked colleagues who visited New Delhi on the University's behalf to tell us their stories...

Peter Clack, Director of International Relations

'Securing the University's place on the ministerial delegation to Delhi only a few months after we installed Lord Karan Bilimoria as the first India-born Chancellor of a Russell Group university presented a wonderful and timely opportunity to raise the profile of our institution in India; to step up our engagement with Indian business and to re-engage with our large Indian alumni group.

'Initially as we started planning there were concerns about how we could really make the most of this opportunity with a very short lead in time. The answer though came down to getting the right colleagues around the table from the very start and drawing on the expertise of colleagues in Alumni Relations, Business Engagement, Student Recruitment and Marketing and Communications.

'It was this collaborative approach that really enabled us to step up and meet the challenge, pulling together a complex programme at short notice and delivering real impact in-country. So much so, that in the words of the Vice-Chancellor, "It felt like Team Birmingham had descended on Delhi".'

Gurmit Kler, Head of Business Engagement

'As India's status as a major global power continues to thrive we recognise that there are increasing opportunities to collaborate for mutual benefit.

'The visit to New Delhi provided an excellent platform and opportunity to host an event with Indian businesses and educational institutions to showcase the breadth of research strengths of the University and demonstrate to Indian organisations that we are keen to engage with them.

'Feedback from delegates who attended the evening was extremely positive and the event was a great success. As a direct result of the Business Engagement Networking event we will, for example, be having a further discussion with Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd to explore reciprocal areas of research interest.'

Ben Goodwin, International Media Relations Manager

'Here in the UK, both the Times Higher Education and The Independent covered news of the delegation prior to the visit itself. On arrival in New Delhi, we met with new and existing press contacts, including journalists from key national newspapers and respected education publications.

'Both the Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor also spent time being interviewed by Indian journalists whilst in New Delhi, discussing the purposes of their visit and the University's proud historical engagement with India. As a result, 56 news articles were published about the Birmingham delegation alone, with subsequent articles in prestigious Indian newspapers such as The Times of India, Deccan Herald and Hindustan Times focusing on our breadth of research links with India.'

Claire O'Sullivan, Head of Alumni Relations

'As part of the India trip, the Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor hosted a reception and dinner for alumni and friends of the University. These occasions are great opportunities to meet alumni and to hear from them directly about the positive impact the University has had on them. Our international alumni are particularly thankful for their time at Birmingham and the trip was valuable to explore how we could work together to utilise their affection to support recruitment and graduating students returning to India.

'It was beneficial to be part of a large delegation as it offered an opportunity to work more closely with colleagues from around the University. I enjoyed the opportunity to pop along to a student recruitment event and to speak to some applicants about life at Birmingham.'

transforming OUR campus

Grange Road development also gets the thumbs up from planners

Planning permission was recently granted by Birmingham City Council for the brand new hall of residence and a new sports pavilion being built near the Grange Road gate of main campus. There will be space for 178 student bedrooms in the new residence and the plans also include a new sports pavilion and changing rooms for people using the nearby Bournbrook pitches.

Staff and students count down to the new Birmingham Dental Hospital and School of Dentistry at Pebble Mill

Clinical staff and students from the Birmingham Dental Hospital and School of Dentistry have visited the construction site of the new facility to have a 'sneak preview' of the build, with a year to go until students begin their studies and clinicians start treating patients at this landmark building.

This integrated, stand alone dental hospital and new home of the University's School of Dentistry is the first to be built in the UK for almost 40 years.

Reinforcing the strong partnership between Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust and the University of Birmingham, the new facility will secure dental training in the region for many years to come, supporting the future workforce, attracting high-quality healthcare and academic staff and guaranteeing a high standard of expertise and dental care for patients.

This significant investment evidences the commitment of the NHS and the University of Birmingham to secure a state-of-the-art clinical and educational dental resource fit for the 21st century for the population of the West Midlands. The new environment will incorporate leading-edge technology, supporting

delivery of world-class service, teaching and research for many internationally renowned leaders in their clinical field.

Questions about the new building were one of the most popular topics of conversation at recent open days with excitement about the project mounting among prospective students. Students applying to the University this year will be the first to go straight into the new building from year one.

Kris Coomar, the School Admissions Tutor said: *'The strong international reputation of the School has always been a draw for applicants to our courses. However, the opportunity for our latest candidates to be the first cohort of students fully trained in the*

new Birmingham Dental Hospital and School of Dentistry has been a significant attraction and cause of great excitement this year. I have no doubt that our new building will continue to attract prospective students for years to come.'



An aerial shot of the new School with a year to go.
Credit: BaS LiFT



Youssef Mousa, first-year Dentistry student, Professor Phil Lumey, Head of the School of Dentistry and Yuhong He, first-year Dentistry student at the University on the site of the new School

Chamberlain – first block reaches the top

The new Chamberlain hall of residence, due to open to students in September this year, is being built on the site of the former Chamberlain Hall. The new residence, which will be home to around 726 students when complete, is made up of three low rise blocks and one tower of around 20 storeys. The lower blocks are positioned to allow views into the Vale from Church Road, and the first of these blocks has now reached its highest point.

At a topping out ceremony held recently to mark this milestone, Guild of Students Vice-President for Housing and Community, Jack Mably, was invited to lay the final area of concrete on the roof. Outgoing Aitken Wing Residents' Association representatives Bryony Anderson and Eloise Hopes were also present to take a closer look at what Vale residents of 2015/16 might be able to

expect. Jack said: *'After visiting the site – I cannot wait for the finished result! The project is a massive one that has not been an easy feat – a lot of hard work and motivation has already gone into the project. I am confident the end result will be fantastic.'*

Lesley Stewart, Director of Residential and Environmental Services at the University also attended the ceremony. She said: *'Today is the culmination of years of planning, discussion and design and I am delighted to see Chamberlain reach this important milestone. This project illustrates our on-going commitment to invest in our stock of accommodation to ensure that our buildings are both modern and sustainable and offer up-to-date facilities for our students.'*



Colin Harper, Balfour Beatty Project Manager and Lesley Stewart, Director of Residential and Environmental Services, at the topping out ceremony



Guild VP Housing and Community, Jack Mably, fills the final section of concrete

Unique forest experiment given the green light

A major new decade-long experiment to study the impact of climate and environmental change on woodlands is a step closer to reality, as planning permission was granted by Stafford Borough Council.

The Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR) field facility, which has been made possible thanks to a transformational £15 million donation, will be created in Mill Haft Wood in Norbury, Staffordshire. BIFoR will be a world-leading initiative, which combined with four similar experiments in other climate zones, will form the largest machine ever built to study how landscapes will respond to our changing climate. The development will begin on site in late spring 2015, with tree enabling works and work to protect the ecology of the area carried out beforehand.

BIFoR will carry out a unique scientific experiment called Free-Air Carbon Dioxide Enrichment (FACE), which involves treating 30-metre plots of semi-natural oak woodland to the concentrations of carbon dioxide

expected to prevail in 2050. Autonomous sensors and instrumented trees will allow scientists to take measurements continuously and remotely, over timescales ranging from seconds to decades, to follow the carbon as it is taken up by the plants and moved through the woodland ecosystem.

The woodland at Mill Haft has been chosen because it is an unmanaged forest of mature trees – whereas similar experiments have only been carried out on young trees in plantations. The findings of the experiment will provide the evidence on which to base strategies for the protection of iconic landscape features, such as oak woodlands, into the future.

The entire experiment depends on changing the woodland as little as possible. Therefore, all of the experimental equipment will be nestled into the woodland by hand, and the ancillary buildings are designed to ensure they blend in with the forest rather than stand out. The proposed lighting is low-level and non-intrusive to minimise interference with wildlife

and to ensure that the facility sits unobtrusively in its location.

Director of BIFoR and Professor of Atmospheric Science, Rob MacKenzie, said: *'We are delighted that Stafford Borough Council has approved our application, and we look forward to becoming part of the community in Norbury. We want BIFoR to become a world-leading centre in the understanding of how forests react to the threats which they face. Our Institute is supported by the Forestry Commission, Natural England, the Woodland Trust, and many other organisations who share our ambition to understand and manage our precious land resource in the UK.'*

'We want BIFoR to become a world-leading centre in the understanding of how forests react to the threats which they face.'

Meet the ARTISTS IN

'The University of Birmingham's Artists in Residency programme invites artists onto campus to explore what we have here and what we do. They often ask questions and challenge the way that we think, offering new interpretations and fresh perspectives. This academic year we are hosting residencies for some superb artists who will work across a range of media and draw on diverse aspects of our research and cultural collections. Please do make contact with these artists, visit their studios on campus and talk to them about your work. We want you to excite and inspire each other.'

Clare Mullett, University Curator

Anne Parouty

Anne's residency is based at Hayloft Studios, Winterbourne House and Garden and will see her creating cyanotypes using plant materials from the garden.

Cyanotype, invented by Sir John Herschel in the 19th century, was one of the first processes to successfully capture images with light. Cyanotypes use iron salts to give a blue and white image. The process is slow photographically and was used to reproduce mechanical drawings, which became known as 'blue-prints'. Many of Anne's images are exposed for over a month. The quality of light, paper type, chemicals and the plant materials themselves all affect the image meaning that every picture is unique.

During a spell in Paris, she developed her love of photography and experimented with different traditional types of developing images, such as gum bichromate. Art college was never on the agenda, she developed her practice by making work, *'when I'm working at my best it just flows,*

I've never been one for over-thinking, capturing a moment of beauty is what draws me.'

Her current project was a happy accident, after leaving a mushroom on a pile of paper she was intrigued by the imprint that it left behind. Working with fungus appealed to Anne who loves walking the line between art and science, *'I'm constantly learning as an artist and see my work as one long experimentation.'*

www.cyanne.co.uk



Matt Westbrook

Matt's work considers how illustrations can be used to tell a story; most recently working with creative writing students via a series of workshops. Students were shown an object out of context and asked to develop a story around it.

Using specialist equipment available at the University, such as a book clamp, Matt is hoping to produce a fore-edge book. Fore-edged printing allows an image to be seen on the side of book when held at an angle. In addition to printmaking he is also interested in collage-making, inspired by archived books, such as the vintage tool catalogue, the *New Motoring Encyclopaedia*, which features detailed sketches.

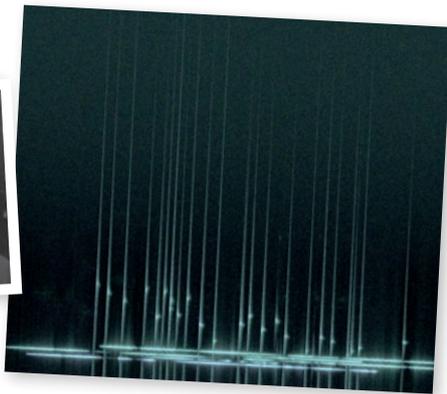
During his one-year residency at the University Matt aims to *'visualise rare books from the Cadbury Research Library and draw a narrative of campus.'* Illustrations can alter an audience's perspective of a written piece of work; Matt tells the story of how the drawings by John Tenniel in the original publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* presented an interpretation of the characters that has shaped how we continue to view them.

Utilising the audience on campus Matt will also conduct research exploring the relationship and interplay between words and images. *'I want to look at how people interpret images, specifically those used online to tell a story including new forms of imagery such as emoji. I would like to create a visual representation of campus using emoji icons.'*

Matt is also involved in Birmingham Art Zine (BAZ), a tongue-in-cheek art-world think-tank, that uses humour to present ideas. Projects include the imaginative campaign to link the 31 Birmingham's around the globe and celebrate them as 'Magic Cities'; the Magic City being the moniker of Birmingham, Alabama.

www.mattwestbrook.co.uk

RESIDENCE



Caroline Devine

Caroline works with sound, creating compositions from sounds and signals around us that are ignored or ordinarily imperceptible and presenting them in the form of multi-channel sound installations. Her sound works can include electromagnetic and other signals, mediated through technology as they are usually inaudible to the human ear.

Scientists at the University run a global network of telescopes called the Birmingham Solar-Oscillations Network (BiSON) that studies the Sun's natural acoustic resonances (or listening to the Sun). Gentle oscillations on the surface of the Sun and other stars are observed and analysed by the team, providing information on stellar structure and evolution.

Caroline began working with Professor Bill Chaplin and the BiSON team in 2012 and became *'fascinated with the sounds of the stars.'* She used BiSON data for 5 Minute Oscillations of the Sun, a multi-channel sound installation sited in an outdoor dome structure that was shortlisted for a British Composer Award. Her recent residency with the University, funded with a Leverhulme Grant, allowed her to work with astrophysicists in the School of Physics and Astronomy and further her understanding of the science behind the data. Working alongside experts in helioseismology, the study of waves within the sun, and asteroseismology, the study of waves within other stars, presented a unique opportunity for Caroline to use data from the NASA Kepler mission in her work.

'The residency has been a fantastic opportunity to explore and discover, and to develop conversations with others seeking to understand the natural physical world through sound.'

An installation, part of the Arts & Science Festival and sited in Birmingham's historic landmark, Perrott's Folly, will use sonified stellar frequencies and rhythms generated by the orbits of newly discovered exoplanets from data collected during NASA's Kepler mission and analysed by the University's academics.

www.carolinedevine.co.uk

Antonio Roberts

Antonio's interests lie in re-mix culture – the taking of an art work and creating a new piece. He explains his motives can be misunderstood but *'it is not done with any malice but as an homage to the original. Some of Andy Warhol's best work and those by seminal Hip-Hop artists would not have existed if they had not been inspired by the imagery or sounds around them.'*

In recent years there has been a liberalisation towards copyright and a push towards 'free culture', something that Antonio identifies with: *'the "Copyleft" movement enables the sharing of works for remixing, allowing great things to happen.'* Antonio shares all of his work online and wants to highlight the benefits of doing so.

In November he began a 12-month residency at the University and will work to inject new life in the University's cultural archives while exploring unconventional ways of creating art and record his research into the growth of digital art forms. He has already used photographs of sculptures in the Barber to create digital animations with free online editing tools.

'As new technologies appear there will be new ways of producing and reinventing art, for example you could 3D print a traditional sculpture, the possibilities are endless. I'm particularly interested in the collection at the Lapworth [Museum of Geology] – imagine if you could find a method of breathing life into the fossils held there, metaphorically speaking.'

Antonio has previously curated an exhibition of 3D printing and glitch art at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, sharing the same space with centuries-old classical paintings. Glitch art is the visual presentation of digital errors by corrupting digital codes or by physically manipulating electronic devices.

Archiveremix.tumblr.com and www.helloatfood.com



ARTS & SCIENCE FESTIVAL 16–22 March 2015

The University's Art & Science Festival will return for its third year in 2015. Running Monday 16–Sunday 22 March and themed 'Sight & Sound', the festival will be a free programme showcasing culture, research and collaboration at the University through talks, exhibition, performances, workshops and screenings. Festival highlights include:

PERFORMANCE:

e-x-p-a-n-d-i-n-g: The History of the Universe in 45 minutes

Tuesday 17 March

(12.00noon, 2.00pm and 4.00pm)

Munrow Sports Centre, Sports Hall

Lie down, look up, and listen – this is an unmissable immersive, entertaining, mind-expanding experience in a mobile planetarium dome with 360 degree visuals! The performance brings together an astrophysicist, two poets and a musician in a careful balance of voices, music, sound and visuals. Admission free – advance booking essential.

TALK:

The Music of the Stars and the Search for New Worlds

Tuesday 17 March (6.00–8.00pm)

Large Lecture Theatre, Poynting Building

When you look up at the sky on a clear night did you know that many of the twinkling stars are playing a stellar symphony, as if they were musical instruments? And that many host planets like our Earth? Dr Tiago Campante, School of Physics and Astronomy, explains how astronomers are listening to the sound of stars and finding new worlds in our Galaxy. Admission free, no booking required.

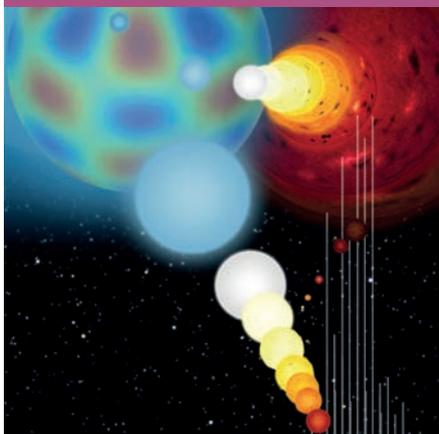
EXHIBITION:

Imaging Mushrooms

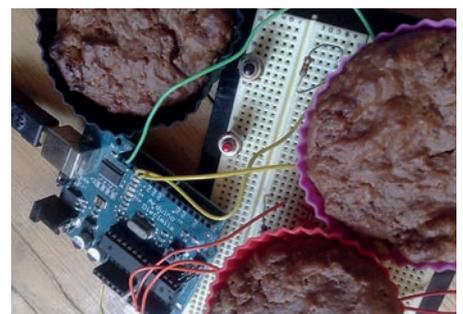
16–23 March (Monday–Friday, 10.00am–4.00pm and Saturday–Sunday, 11.00am–4.00pm)

Courtyard Gallery, Winterbourne House and Garden

Winterbourne artist in residence, Anne Parouty, invites photographer and forager Ming de Nasty, chemical engineer Dr Philip Cox, and composer and Professor of Composition Michael Zev Gordon to imagine and explore mushrooms from alternative perspectives; from representations produced using the oldest photographic printing processes and micro-imaging, to sound shapes captured within a musical score. Admission free, no booking required.



View the full programme and booking details at:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/artsandsciencefestival



WORKSHOPS:

The Cake Orchestra

Friday 20 March

(12.00noon–2.00pm)

Computer Science, Atrium

The cake orchestra is a cake-technology-music interface for people without much musical ability but with an interest in technology and cakes. Drop in and move the cakes around to trigger the instruments. Guaranteed to be more edible than a real orchestra! Admission free, no booking required.

Visualising Sound – Art & Music Workshop

Friday 20 March (2.30–4.00pm)

Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Explore sound and instrumental technique with leading professional musicians Jack McNeill and Ulrich Heinen, discovering the collection through improvisation. Working with a visual artist, create your own music through drawing, creating graphic interpretations of paintings that will, in turn, be used by the musicians to create a unique and original sound tour. The workshop offers the chance to explore familiar Barber paintings in a new way and create a truly original experience. Open to adults only. The workshop will be led by composer and educator Jeremy Clay: www.jeremyclaymusic.com. Admission free, booking essential. Call 0121 414 2261 or email education@barber.org.uk to book.

Celebrating **EQUALITY**, championing **DIVERSITY**

It's a double celebration for diversity during February as, not only does the University mark Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans (LGBT) History Month, it is rejoicing at being ranked among the top gay-friendly employers in the country.

The University has been placed 79th overall in the prestigious Stonewall Top 100 Employers 2015, which is an impressive rise of 180 places from last year and reflects the University's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive workplace.

The Stonewall Top 100 Employers is compiled from submissions to Stonewall's annual Workplace Equality Index. The Index assesses employers' activities in a comprehensive survey of policy and practice; from promoting

the visibility of senior lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) role models to guaranteeing access to benefits for same-sex partners and training employees on discrimination issues.

The University will observe LGBT History Month, which takes place every year in February and celebrates the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. Acting as a focal point for LGBT History Month in the city, the University offers a range of events and activities across campus that are devised and hosted by both staff and students and open to all.

A full programme can be found at www.birmingham.ac.uk/lgbt2015



The University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood commented: *'I am delighted that Stonewall has formally recognised the University's commitment to promoting equality, diversity and fairness for LGB members of staff and this is something that will remain crucial to our core values as we strive to remain an employer of choice.'*

LGBT History Month Launch

Wednesday 4 February, 4.00–6.30pm
Beorma Bar, Guild of Students

Come help us toast the University's success at being ranked within the Stonewall Top 100 Employers at this networking event. Equality staff from both the University and the Guild of Students, alongside members of the staff Rainbow Network and the student LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) Association, will be looking back at a successful year, as well as ahead to planned diversity initiatives.

Sexuality, Identity and Ambiguity in the Barber Collection

Friday 13 February, 11.00am–12.00noon
Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Celebrate LGBT History Month with a revealing gallery tour exploring works in the Barber collection that consider issues of gender, sexuality and identity. The tour will focus on the 'effeminate' pose of Alexander the Great, the ambiguous body of Venus in our Renaissance panel painting and the beauty of our Pre-Raphaelite muse.

Flatpack Film Festival Shorts

Thursday 26 February, 12.30–1.30pm
Lecture Theatre, Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Leave your prudish side at the door, and enjoy a selection of LGBT shorts, aimed to put a smile on your face. Expect embarrassing stories, innuendo, and the very finest in LGBT filmmaking from across the globe. Curated by Flatpack Film Festival. **Suitable for ages 15+.**

The Blue Bower (Rossetti, 1865), *Alexander the Great* (Master of Griselda Legend, about 1494)



STAFF OPINION SURVEY HAVE YOUR SAY UPDATE

Have Your Say (HYS), the University's staff survey, took place in Autumn 2013. The results were made available in the spring of last year and since then teams of colleagues from across the campus have been busy analysing the results for their own area, devising action plans and putting those plans into practice.

Having received updates on the actions being taken in the autumn of last year it is clear that a great deal is happening, some important issues are being tackled and a number of very exciting initiatives are being developed. This is a University-wide activity and what we have presented here is only a very small selection of some of the outcomes of this process. We hope that this will inspire you to make contact with the local HYS champions in your area, to find out what is happening within your team and to see how the responses that you made over 18 months ago are already beginning to make a difference.

Martin Stringer, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Staffing

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCIENCES HAVE DEVELOPED A SERIES OF INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE TO HYS 2013.

Staff requested a bigger focus on workplace wellbeing as well as increased communications and awareness of organisational decisions and change management. In response the College redeveloped its induction processes both College-wide and School specific.

The new induction resources are coordinated at a College level and provide each member of staff with the resources they need to do their job effectively and efficiently. It also ensures that information about ongoing decisions and processes at School, College and University level are consistent and easily available on the intranet with the ultimate goal of making staff feel well supported in all aspects of their working environment. Going forward, the College is looking to continue to create further resources, such as welcome videos from key members of College staff.

The College has also redeveloped its communication channels including its newsletters and organising new away days. An away day was organised for all members of staff within the Education Operational Group, the first time all professional services staff in the wider

Education Office had come together as a team. There was also an opportunity to network with other colleagues and understand how individual roles contribute to the University's success. The weekly e-bulletin newsletter, *MDS Messenger*, has been redesigned to include new sections, such as a community segment, allowing staff to have a greater input into the content of the newsletter.

Responding to HYS, the College wanted to raise awareness of the University support services available to staff. A College Health & Wellbeing event, attended by 400 colleagues, gave staff an opportunity to network with other colleagues, receive advice and information on University wellbeing services and enjoy a variety of interactive activities. The event was also attended by external charities and health services that offer guidance around work-life balance. In addition to this, a number of the College's researchers exhibited at the event to showcase the College's work in key research areas. Highlights of the event included posture screening, Roy Castle Lung Foundation's inflatable lung exhibition, strawberry DNA extraction with our Neurotrauma and Wound Healing research team and 'making a cell' competition with the Rheumatology Research Group.

'The whole atmosphere was brilliant. Having these events for staff is really encouraging – the range of different activities available this time was good – it brings everyone together within the College which is nice and you meet people who you only have the opportunity to talk to on the phone.'
Wendy Trevis-Smith, Education Administrative Officer.



Learn more

intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/university/survey/index.aspx

or

intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/mds/staff-survey-results

We are now looking towards the follow up to HYS 2013. We have run the staff surveys every two years and have been through three cycles under the current format. The advantage of keeping the same format is that this allows us to track trends, especially in staff engagement, from one survey to the next. However, as things change within the University and in the wider sector, we are aware that we might not always be asking the most appropriate questions. As we move into a new phase of the University's strategic plan, and as we look around at alternative ways of engaging staff and seeking their views, we are looking seriously at the format of the next survey, due to be held in spring 2016. We would value any comments and feedback from across the University as we explore the possible approaches and will inform you towards the end of the year how this process has developed.

what would
YOU change?

shape your
university

what do
YOU want?

how do
YOU feel?

POD Consultants have worked with local teams to explore issues related to work-life balance. These activities typically include:

- Understanding the differences between personal views on work-life balance and individual preferred ways of working
- Clarifying work priorities and expectations that leaders and teams have of each other related to goals, priorities and communication
- Exploring when and how to raise concerns when balance is threatened
- Creating a supportive working environment and agreeing associated standards of behaviour

- Identifying practical local actions to promote balance
- Sharing personal recommendations for maintaining balance and control; including managing email, planning, and maintaining focus

In addition to these team activities the Coaching Academy has been supporting individuals across the University to deal with issues related to maintaining balance and control. Individuals or teams who wish to discuss specific issues and what support could be provided should contact their local POD Consultant. intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/contact/pod/index.aspx

CAMPUS CURIOSITIES



What is it?

Alan Turing III 2000 by Eduardo Paolozzi

Where is it?

Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art, Research and Cultural Collections

This piece is one of a collection of plaster maquettes, bequeathed to the University of Birmingham by the artist following his death in 2005. Maquettes are created as small scale models for larger sculptural works. *Alan Turing III 2000* represents mathematician and computer scientist, Alan Turing. Throughout his career

Turing made several advances in the field of computing. He developed early computers and undertook important work at Bletchley Park during WWII to crack German Enigma codes. In line with the law at that time, in 1952 he was prosecuted for gross indecency for having a homosexual relationship. Instead of prison, he opted for a series of hormone injections that left him chemically castrated. In 1954, he committed suicide by cyanide poisoning.

Learn more

Please see <http://rcc-redmarley.tumblr.com> for an expanded blog post.



Matthew Parris to deliver Baggs 2015 Happiness Lecture

Monday 22 June, 6.00pm

Great Hall, Aston Webb Building

The Baggs Memorial Lecture began in 1976, when Birmingham-born Thomas Baggs bequeathed a legacy donation to the University to provide for an annual public lecture on the theme of 'Happiness – what it is and how it may be achieved by individuals as well as nations.'

This year the University is pleased to welcome Matthew Parris, who worked for the Foreign Office and the Conservative Research Department before serving as MP for West Derbyshire. He joined *The Times* as a parliamentary sketch-writer in 1988, a post he held for 13 years. He now writes as a columnist for the paper and in 2011 won the British Press Award for Columnist of the Year. He broadcasts for radio and television, and presents the biographical programme *Great Lives* on BBC Radio 4. He is also a regular columnist for *The Spectator* magazine. Matthew won the Orwell Prize for his acclaimed autobiography, *Chance Witness*, published in 2002.

[BOOT IT]

**UNTIL 8 FEBRUARY
WE ARE OFFERING
10% EXTRA FREE ON
GROUP EXERCISE
VOUCHERS.**

Striving for a healthy lifestyle in 2015, UBSport can help

Enjoy Outdoor Boot Camp classes in and around our beautiful campus on Tuesdays and Fridays (5.00–6.00pm). Meet at Munrow Reception five minutes before the start of this circuits-based class.

If you are usually put off dance classes by tricky moves, then the brand new dance class, Sh'bam, is for you. Set to chart-topping music with easy-to-follow steps, it is the ultimate fun way to work out. Classes are Wednesdays 8.15–9.15pm. www.sport.bham.ac.uk



Introducing Beacon: recognition for teaching and the support of learning

We are pleased to announce that with effect from February 2015 the Centre for Learning and Academic Development & Learning Spaces (CLAD & LS) will be offering an institutional route to professional recognition by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) for those who teach and support learning. You will no longer have to apply directly, at a cost, to the HEA.

The University of Birmingham has received approval to grant professional recognition against descriptors 1–3 of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). Successful Beacon applicants will apply for and be awarded either Associate Fellow, Fellow or Senior Fellow

of the Higher Education Academy. The categories of fellowship correspond to types of role and experience applicants have in teaching and supporting learning, labelled descriptors in the UKPSF. The categories will also have a direct link to Teaching Academy membership categories.

Beacon is a development scheme available to all those who are unable to take part in the CLAD & LS accredited programmes. If you are interested please email beacon@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Learn more

www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/UKPSF_2011_English.pdf



Fairtrade Fortnight

22 February–7 March

A number of events are being organised including the Fairtrade Wine Tasting in Café Aroma on 25 February, 6.00pm.

Learn more

www.birmingham.ac.uk/fairtrade

Green Supplier Fair and Ethical Market

Thursday 5 March, 11.00am–3.00pm

Great Hall, Aston Webb Building

Come along and see how the University's suppliers are helping us to reduce carbon through a variety of sustainability initiatives. There will also be an opportunity to purchase Fairtrade and ethically traded goods from the Oxfam Society's Ethical Market.



news+views

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

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.

Dr Kay van Damme featured extensively on the BBC News Channel, BBC *Breakfast* and *BBC News Online* discussing the University's project to send Daphnia water fleas to the International Space Station for an experiment into how they cope with zero gravity in space and the affect that zero gravity could have on humans.

Dr Rosa Freedman wrote an article for *The Conversation* website about the attacks in Paris. The article was a lead story and shared over 1,000 times.

Professor David Charlton was interviewed on BBC Radio 4, in *the Guardian* and the *Taipei Times* about the Atlas experiment at the Large Hadron Collider.

Dr Talat Farooq commented on Pakistan's anti-terrorism measures, in the wake of the school massacre that claimed the lives of more than 130 children, in an article for *The Times*.

The School of Metallurgy and Materials 3D laser printed a penguin family, which were featured on *Meteoweb* in Italy and on *Industrie-techno* in France.

Dr Berny Sèbe was interviewed in an episode of *Great Continental Railway Journeys* on BBC Two.

Professor Scott Lucas was interviewed by BBC Radio 5 Live and BBC Radio 4 about the publication of the CIA's report on torture.

The Duke of Cambridge's visit to St Basils, a charity for homeless young people, to see the results of a mental health programme, run jointly with the University's academics, was featured on *ITV News Central*. Dr Jennifer Cumming was interviewed as part of the piece about the use of sports psychology to help residents rebuild their lives.

Professor Laura Piddock was interviewed on the *Jeremy Vine Show* (BBC Radio 2) about the discovery of a new antibiotic and how this is a 'game-changer' for research into new antibiotics. Professor Piddock was also featured in *The Telegraph*, the *Mail Online*, *New York Daily Times*, *The Japan Times* and *BBC News Online*.



feeling social...

Winter Wonderland on Campus

During November and December 2014 staff, students and visitors were asked to send us their pictures of campus looking lovely and wintery using the hashtag #uobwinter on Instagram and Twitter. There were some beautiful images shared and the best are printed here.



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

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.



Christopher Mills ...in my own words

Christopher Mills has worked at the University for 47 years and is currently a Technical Assistant at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

I have worked at the University for almost half a century, yet it really does not seem that long. When I left school, I initially started work in the Chemistry Department, based in the Howarth Building, and for more than 25 years I worked there, undertaking tasks such as reprographics, photography, audio-visual set-up and chemical handling. I also serviced lecture theatres, which back then involved blackboards and overhead projectors, with the class notes handwritten on sheets of acetate.

The University's campus has changed so much since I started here; a lot of the halls of residence were closer to the centre, but these have now been converted to teaching space, such as University House, which now contains the Business School. We are constantly expanding and developing and I do wonder what the University campus will look like in the future.

I have been based at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts for the past 20 years, as part of their front-of-house (and behind-the-scenes) team. I have quite a varied role, which includes preparing the venue for internal and external hire functions, covering for the security staff in the galleries, handling works of art and greeting guests. I particularly enjoy being involved in events – welcoming musicians, artists and members of the public. On Fridays during term time the Barber offers free concerts at lunchtime, and I have the opportunity to receive renowned classical musicians.

Over the years, I have assisted the Curatorial Technician with transporting items in and out of the galleries. When I began at the Barber, I was sent on a course to learn how to hang paintings and to remove them carefully from their frames. It is a delicate process, as works owned by the Barber can be centuries old. I have been here many years, yet I still find it exciting to be at the Barber after hours, although it's not quite

Night at the Museum! I have become accustomed to the responsibility of handling valuable works of art, but it can be nerve-racking when the owner or the courier is watching over you.

I have always appreciated art; however, as I have spent many of my days in the gallery, I have developed a love of fine arts. My favourite painting at the Barber is *Jockeys Before The Race* by Edgar Degas – I never get tired of seeing it. *A Portrait of Countess Golovine* by Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun is also a very beautiful piece. We currently have a Pablo Picasso, *Woman Sleeping in a Chair*, on loan from Japan, which always catches my eye when I walk through the Blue Gallery. I will be sad to see it go when it is returned.

The method of preparing lecture theatres and concert halls for symposiums, recitals and talks has changed significantly during my time at the Barber. While the staging is similar, the audio-visual technology involved is different; it was all slide projectors when I started. The types of events have also changed; nowadays we provide activities for schools and families and offer contemporary artists the space to exhibit at the Barber.

The Barber is a Grade II listed building, so I'm not sure it will be transformed in the same way as other parts of campus. Yet I think the gallery will continue to progress and find innovative ways to offer fine art to the public. I am 65 now, so I'm thinking about retirement, but when I do decide to go, I'm planning to become a Friend of the Barber Institute and I will definitely keep up with developments at the Barber and the University.

Colleagues at the Barber often say, "we don't know what we're going to do without you when you retire." I find it a little embarrassing, but it is nice to be appreciated.]