

Question Time



and finally...

Trevor Shields

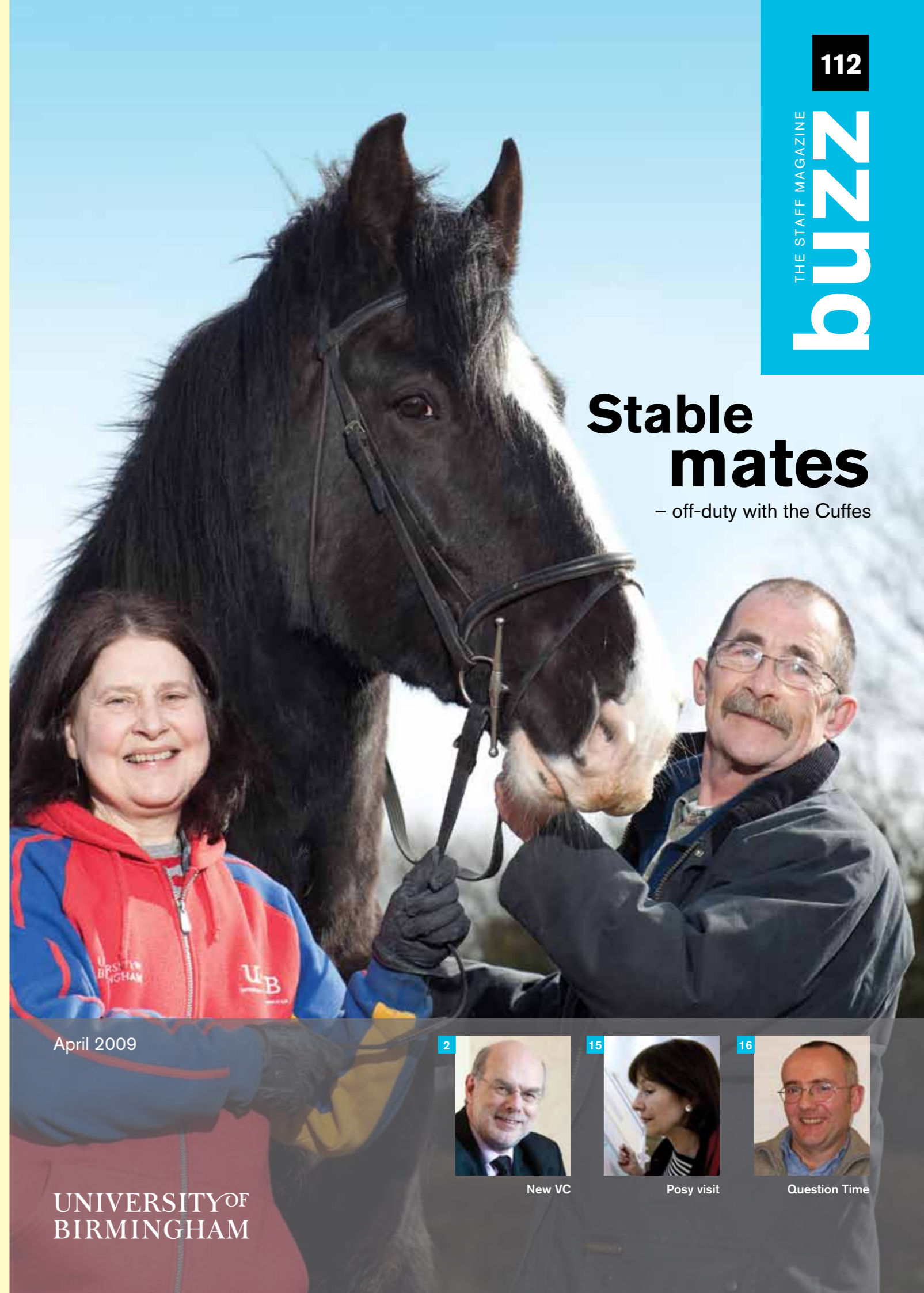
- 1 What do you do?**
Provide support for the University's environmental policy and sustainability strategy, hopefully improving the University's environmental performance.
- 2 What do you really do?**
Mostly move words and numbers around on a PC and go to meetings.
- 3 How do you get to work?**
A 20-minute walk from Harborne, which on a good day takes half an hour.
- 4 What's the best aspect of your job?**
Meeting and working with a variety of staff and students around campus.
- 5 What's the worst aspect of your job?**
A never-ending stream of email. I'm afraid I'm a bit of a Luddite when it comes to some technologies.
- 6 What would you like to be doing in five years' time?**
Not sure but given I've been at the University since 1980 suspect I might still be here.

- 7 What do you most enjoy about University life?**
Have been fortunate to meet a wide range of people from different places and cultures. Particularly like the atmosphere around degree days.
- 8 How do you unwind?**
Walking or spending time on the allotment digging, planting, harvesting or preferably relaxing in a deck chair.
- 9 Which book is on your bedside table?**
William Cobbett-Rural Rides, although there is a pile of around ten other books to get round to. Books are the one thing I buy a lot of.
- 10 What is your favourite tippie?**
Any pint of decent real ale.
- 11 What makes a good night out?**
A couple of pints with friends in a cosy pub after a long walk in the Lake District.
- 12 Which animal are you most like?**
Earthworm.
- 13 Describe your favourite holiday?**
Camping in beautiful scenery. This year we camped by a beach on the Isle of Lewis.
- 14 What is your favourite sport?**
I still play for Mermaids, the staff cricket team, and am a fairweather Huddersfield Town supporter.
- 15 Who are the top three people on your fantasy dinner party list?**
Charles Darwin, Herbert Chapman, Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall (to do the cooking).
- 16 If you were a superhero, who would you be?**
I suppose it would have to be Mr Environment, if he exists.
- 17 What has been the highlight of your life, to date?**
The birth of our daughter Megan.
- 18 If you could banish one thing from the world what would it be?**
Clubroot, a disease of the brassica family.
- 19 Describe yourself in three words?**
Laid back.
- 20 What is your personal motto?**
Take each day as it comes.

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Stable mates

– off-duty with the Cuffes



April 2009



New VC



Posy visit



Question Time

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

YOUR BUZZ

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April cover: University security guards, husband and wife Pete and Sue Cuffe, pose with their Shire horse Rogen. Sue, who is seen in the University of Birmingham Sport sweatshirt she wears for riding, keeps horses in fields near the couple's Kings Norton home. Full story page 11.



Say hello, wave goodbye...

Departing Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Sterling (right) prepares to hand over the University leadership to his successor Professor David Eastwood. As Buzz went to press, Professor Eastwood was due to take up his post as the Birmingham's 11th Vice-Chancellor.

3,350 'Have their say'

The staff opinion survey 2009 is now closed and, especially considering that this is the first time that the University has commissioned such a comprehensive staff survey, the final response rate of 56 percent is a really great achievement. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate.

The survey was designed to gather your views about what it is like to work at the University and we are very pleased that 3,350 staff grasped this important opportunity to play a part in shaping our University's future. Your views will be represented in the findings of the survey and we look forward to sharing these with you in May's Buzz.

Before that, some initial findings will be published via the webpage below from the end of April and these will give a University-level view of where we are – what we do well and what we need to do better. When the more

detailed local findings are shared with staff in May, everyone will then have the opportunity to get involved in planning a suitable range of positive actions to facilitate improvements that will make the University a great place to work. The whole process will benefit the University as a whole, as well as individual colleges, schools and departments.

Remember

ORC International, our external survey provider, will provide the University with anonymised reports which present a picture of what staff think – no one at the University will see individual survey questionnaires.

For more information, including answers to frequently asked questions about the survey, please see: www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/consultation/haveyoursay

Institute welcomes Duke

HRH the Duke of Kent visited the Institute of Occupational and Environmental Medicine to commemorate the institute's 25 years of work. Institute scientists are warning of emerging environmental health risks, particularly in the developing world. The institute is also a leading centre for the study of human exposure to air pollutants and measuring environmental health risks in large populations. It is leading the development of the University's over all approach to Environment and Human Health research.



Carpet of colour

Amateur photographer and staff member Karen Turner-Brown captures the essence of the season with this photograph of crocuses carpeting the University grounds. Karen, Academic Secretary in the School of Education, says: 'After a long, harsh winter it was really inspiring to see all the spring flowers coming to life on campus.'



Working for a better world

Professor Malcolm Press (seated), Head of the College of Life and Environmental Sciences and President of the British Ecological Society, signs a memorandum of understanding in a ceremony at the House of Commons with co-signatories (from left) Professor Martin Humphries, Chair of the Biochemical Society, Professor Ian Johnston, President of the Society for Experimental Biology, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, Minister of Sustainable Development and Energy Innovation, and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, Phil Willis MP, Chair of Innovation, University and Skills Committee.

Professor Press said: 'Some of the greatest challenges that face the world – climate change, the spread of infectious diseases, and food security, for example – depend for solutions on interdisciplinary research in the environmental and biosciences. Our closer co-operation can only expedite progress.'



Demonstrating our quality – Institutional Audit 2009

An Institutional Audit team from the Quality Assurance Agency will be on campus from April 27 until May 1. They will assess whether the right systems and processes are in place to maintain academic standards and to ensure a high-quality student experience.

Auditors will meet staff to discuss:

- Learning, teaching and supervision
- Administration, learning resources and support
- Management of academic standards
- Students' learning opportunities

The team wish to see a range of people including newer academics and administrative staff, and senior staff. Anyone who will be involved in these meetings will be contacted by the Academic Quality Unit. The auditors will also meet undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The auditors will also spend time reviewing paper-based evidence, including committee minutes, University publications and the outcomes of the School Quality Reviews for Engineering and the Bachelor of Medical Sciences, that have been selected as 'sampling trails'.

Professor Adrian Randall, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Students) comments: 'Institutional Audit is a central feature of the UK's approach to external quality

assurance with a strong emphasis on the student learning and teaching experience. My thanks go out to the many staff who have already been involved in the preparations for Audit and to those who will take part in the Audit week meetings.'

A 'briefing paper' summarising a wide range of issues ranging from reorganisation, committee structures and collaborative provision to learning resources, welfare support and programme development was submitted in February. The Guild of Students also completed a written submission focussing on the student experience at Birmingham. The auditors were on campus in March for a two-day 'briefing visit'.

The IA team are senior academics all of whom have conducted audits at other institutions.

- Emeritus Professor Malcolm Cook, formerly of Exeter University
- Dr Richard Latto, Senior Psychology Lecturer, University of Liverpool
- Professor Peter McIntyre, Head of Quality Enhancement, University of Glamorgan
- Professor Sarah Sayce, Head of the School of Surveying, Kingston University

The last IA was in 2004. The findings of IA 2009 will be published in September, and will be reported in a future issue of Buzz.

Charity round-up

Feast of Red Nose antics on campus

Comic Relief...

Corporate Relations staff joined millions of people all over the UK to raise money for this year's Comic Relief Red Nose Day. Here, we feature some of the activities that helped to swell the coffers. If your event isn't included, let us know what you did and how much you raised and we'll include it in the May issue.

Raising agents

Sieves and wooden spoons were the order of the day when members of staff baked cakes (pictured) to help Comic Relief, raising a grand total of £332.23 for charity. Happy helpers and bakers included:

- **Graduate School**
Gurpreet Grewal-Kang
Karen Clews
- **ISAS**
Lisa Field and her friend
- **School of Education**
Sofia Hansrod
- **International Relations**
Martha Campos
Jennie Milford
- **Design and Publications**
Jo Wyles
Tom Willey
Cat Evans
Raj Dhanda (poster design)
- **Systems Team**
Rebecca Rosewarne
Jenny Hughes
- **Marketing and Communications Team**
Sarah Hammon
Kirsty Mack
Anna Ward
Francey Begum

Red Food rewards

Cherryade, liquorice strings, cherry-topped bakewell tarts and juicy strawberries were among the crimson offerings at the imaginative Red Food Sale held by International Relations, raising £86.90 for Comic Relief causes.

Fridge magnate!

Yvonne Haines, International Student Adviser, donned a pair of rubber gloves and a red nose to undertake a task that everyone will acknowledge as requiring not only elbow grease but true grit – cleaning the office fridge. Yvonne survived the experience and her pluck and determination raised a grand total of £43 for Comic Relief.

Cake sale

A cake sale held in the Admissions Office on Red Nose Day, with cakes contributed by members of staff, raised £88.10.

Moaning for money

A Moan Box was set up in Student Recruitment where staff also ran a Comic Relief Celebrity Sweepstake, raising a total of £30 from the two events.

Game for a laugh

The Design and Publications team and the Online Communications team devised a host of moneyraising ideas to make Red Nose Day even more interesting and fun-filled.

Winners of the wild and whacky games on offer – for a price – were:

- **Tom's Rock Hard University Quiz:**
Winner: Martha Campos
Prize: Bottle of Pimms
- **Hola Hoop Tastic**
1st place: Nathan Cavell
Prize: Gok Wan book
2nd place: Tracey Lancaster
- **How many sweets?**
Winner: Sarah Kent
Prize: The sweets!
- **Best Caption**
1st place: Peter Kiddle
2nd place: Matt Edwards
- **Spot the Ball**
Nobody spotted it! Prize for the worst guess if you're still interested.

Other kindly-donated prizes included wine, jelly babies, liquorice allsorts, ear-rings, joke books and much more.

The games had raised a total of £86.20 and counting, as Buzz went to press.



...and other good causes

Midnight Walk 2009

The University will once again be the starting point for Birmingham St Mary's Hospice annual Midnight Walk on Saturday July 4. The ten kilometre marshalled route will take walkers through Edgbaston, Harborne and Selly Oak arriving back at the University in the early hours of Sunday morning.

This year the theme is red, white and blue to celebrate American Independence Day! On completion of the walk participants will receive a well-earned breakfast hot dog! This non-competitive sponsored walk is open to all aged 12 or over on July 4 2009, all under 17's must be accompanied by an adult. The entry fee is just £10 per person.

People are asked to try to raise as much as possible. Marshals are also needed to help on the night.

For more information please visit www.bsmh.org.uk/midnightwalk or contact Charlotte Sudbury on 0121 472 1191.

Prints sale for Macmillan

Debbie Gordon, PA to Professor Ann Logan in the Molecular Science Group is helping to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support via a website selling art work.

'Macmillan was given about 6,000 pictures by a company which moved overseas,' she explains. 'My dad volunteered his services and Macmillan asked him to arrange the sale of the pictures. We designed a website which displays several of them and these are updated regularly. They are sold at less than half their RRP and 100 per cent of the profits go direct to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Visit www.macmillanprints.btik.com.

Fancy the Half Marathon?

University of Birmingham Sport is co-ordinating several key activities in preparation for the 2009 Birmingham Half Marathon, which is due to take place on October 11.

UBSport will be providing tips on training for even the most inexperienced runner from one of the UK's most experienced running coaches. If you're thinking of taking part, please let UBSport know so they can keep track of all staff who will be running and let you know when the advice sessions will be held. Volunteers are needed to support the event too.

See May Buzz for more information...



Kate is on the run

I am going to be running the London Marathon to raise money for the Cornelia De Lange Syndrome Foundation UK, writes Kate Woodcock, (below) of the Centre for Neurodevelopmental Disorders in the School of Psychology.

While doing my PhD here at the Birmingham I have been inspired by the good humour and altruism shown by families going through hell just because of a tiny genetic mistake in the DNA of someone in their family.

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome is a rare genetic disorder that can cause profound physical and intellectual disabilities and many medical problems. People often have a weak muscle around the top of their stomach, meaning that they can be in constant pain because of acid coming up from the tummy.

The Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation UK is a support group for people with CDLS, their parents, carers and families, helping them in a variety of ways.

If you would like to sponsor me then please visit www.justgiving.com/katewoodcock. I would really appreciate your support because I know just how much it would mean to the families the people with this debilitating disorder.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Drivers needed

The Monday Night Club is a long-established social club for people with learning difficulties, which is run by Birmingham students. Members and student volunteers meet every Monday night during the autumn and spring terms from 7.00pm–9.00pm.

Bureaucratic changes and insurance rules means the club is have trouble recruiting students as drivers to bring members to meetings. It is hoping that staff might volunteer, particularly for the drive home between 9.00pm and 10.30pm. For more information and for driver guidelines, please contact s.r.bates@bham.ac.uk.

Trust in Malcolm

Professor Malcom Press, Head of the College of Life and Environmental Sciences, has been appointed to the Council of the National Trust. He is currently a member of the NERC Science and Innovation Strategy Board and has extensive field research experience. He has worked in tropical forests, on the effects of climate change on Arctic and British ecosystems, and is the acknowledged expert on the ecology of parasitic plants. Some of his research on the latter has included the use of hemiparasites in improving the biodiversity of Peak District grasslands.

ERI seminars

Following the success of the first Cross College Europe seminar examining inclusion and identity in February, the ERI Strategic Management Committee is organising a series of future seminars. Topics will include the role of the past in the politics and society of the present, politics and the environment in 20th Europe, and outsiders' views of Europe. Anyone interested in attending and presenting should contact Tim Haughton (t.j.haughton@bham.ac.uk).

Online, on Birmingham

The University has launched a new way of telling Birmingham people about its research on the city. A website unveiled last month is dedicated to stories about Birmingham, including Longbridge, new 'Brummies' and how citizens have made a difference to the city. The website: www.birmingham.bham.ac.uk presents a summary of the University's research. Today, the public has an opportunity to hear at first hand from the researchers behind the stories.

Birds of a feather – work together



Jenni Ameghino finds out why ornithologist Graham Martin is top of the pecking order.

When was the last time you saw a penguin on campus? Think carefully because you might have forgotten! May be you vaguely recall the black-and-white plumage and the endearing comic waddle but can't pinpoint a date. Or possibly – and you

wouldn't be alone in this – you think it's a trick question.

The correct answer, of course, is: during the 80s, when a small group of Humboldt penguins used to reside at the University. 'It would be great to have them back,' muses Graham Martin, Professor of Aviary Sensory Science and chair of the Centre for Ornithology in the School of Biosciences. 'They are lovely creatures, very entertaining and very easy to train.'

Unfortunately, he explains, in recent years Birmingham's bird-keeping facilities have been adapted and upgraded to accommodate other species; a situation which, for now, rules out the return of the much-loved penguins.

Today, the network of large aviaries tucked away on the northern fringe of campus is home to a diverse range of bird species including colourful Parakeets taking part in research into problem-solving. Nearby, in temperature-controlled enclosures in the Biosciences building, there are Australian Zebra Finches – for studies on bio-rhythms as they reproduce so quickly – plus, Senegal Parrots and Kakariki parakeets. But the self-proclaimed monarchs of the feathered set-up – and currently the focus of research at the centre – are the Great Cormorants, and a small colony of this menacing-looking yet co-operative species is helping with several research studies.

As Graham is being photographed, a large, black Cormorant with piercing, emerald-green eyes is making tentative pecks at his scalp while balancing on a nearby perch. Two more are swinging on a branch suspended by chains over their outdoor pool, while the rest of the group is engaged in the preening, wing-waving and showing-off activities that precede their daily work schedule.

'They're quite tame,' says Graham, rubbing his head. 'We've had them for three or four years having raised them from chicks. We found they were trying to pair up over the summer but, to be quite honest, we would prefer that they were interested in us rather than one another at the moment.'

He leads the way into a large, dimly-lit room which houses an enormous dive tank and smells faintly of sardines. 'We call this the Cormorant Pavilion,' he announces. Current research involves placing back-lit transparent panels with horizontal and vertical stripes underwater and encouraging the Cormorants to 'select' the desired pattern for rewards of food. 'I particularly wanted to work with diving birds and Cormorants are very obliging. We are trying to discover precisely how they locate and catch their prey. We have shown that their vision is surprisingly poor underwater so we think they somehow disturb fish at close range and grab them by extending their long necks at high speed.'

At one end of the tank is a prototype 'Fish Cannon'. Pythonesque as it sounds, this device will fire dead fish at high speed through the water for the Cormorants to grab. 'By mimicking the escape response of fish we aim to observe how the birds react.' Allied research conducted by Graham's colleague, Pat Butler, includes calculating energy expended when diving by measuring how much oxygen the birds use. 'In some places around the world, Cormorants are seen as a pest because they steal fish from farmers and anglers. We hope research like this will help to find ways to combat this without damaging populations.'

'My father was a keen birdwatcher and when I was growing up we used to go out with our binoculars into the local countryside'

The Essex-born father of two, who turned 60 last November, has been at Birmingham for more than 30 years, arriving from post-doctoral research at the University of Sussex to work in the then Department of Extramural Studies. He ran ornithological natural history classes 'for enthusiastic adults,' and now leads the UK's only MSc in Ornithology here, with course meetings at weekends enabling mature students who are in work to attend part-time. Graham accepted a personal Chair in 1996.

'My father was a keen birdwatcher and when I was growing up we used to go out with our binoculars into the local countryside,' remembers the man who for 27 years kept a Tawny Owl called Wol as a pet. Yet he chose Psychology over Biology for his undergraduate studies at Exeter, researching vision in owls and developing what was to become a lifelong interest in the links between vision perception and behaviour.

While remaining committed to his teaching, he is passionate about his research and also finds time to edit *Bird Study*, the journal of the British Trust for Ornithology.

The centre's global collaborations have taken him far and wide, including to New Zealand, Israel, the Caribbean and sub-Antarctica

(where he studied Albatrosses and King Penguins). This year, he will be investigating Blue Cranes in South Africa. 'They are the national bird and recently they have been flying into power lines which may be something to do with their vision. We intend to find out.'



Who's who on the University Executive Board

As the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood, takes the helm at the University, this at-a-glance guide sets out how the University's senior management team is organised.

The University Executive Board (UEB) is the Vice-Chancellor's management team, who meet on a weekly basis to provide strategic management and leadership of the University.

They are charged with:

- taking decisions on any aspect of the University's strategy, operation or management
- fostering good communication and inter-collegiate activity in the University
- promoting transparency in decision-making

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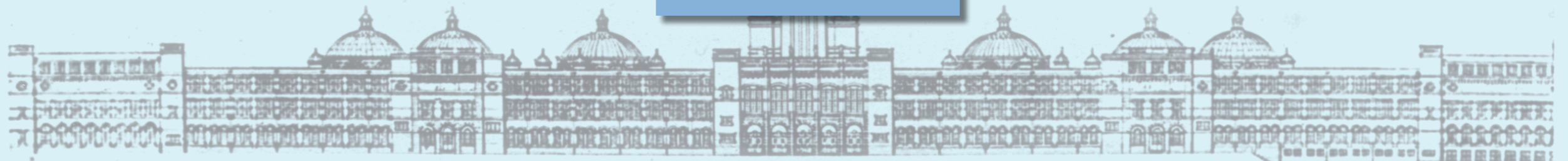


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By Day...By Night

Peter and Sue Cuffe

By Day

We both work in the University's Security Section, *writes Pete*.

Sue has worked here six years and I've been here for four. We love the job, it's a good team to be in and we often get chance to see each other during the day, although we might be working on different parts of the campus depending on the shift we're on.

We live in Kings Norton, have two sons and have been married for 38 years although we have been together for 40. We met through horse-riding. I like to go riding occasionally and I was out with a friend riding in a field near Cotteridge when I met Sue who was helping out with some horses there. We've never looked back.



By Night

We spend most of our spare time looking after our Shire horse, Rogen (as in he's a rogue 'un) *writes Sue*.

I've always loved horses and riding and I bought him at Henley Market six years ago when he was six months old. He was just a baby then – 14hh tall and with a dreadlocked tail. He was a bit of a handful as he wasn't broken or gelded, hence his name! He was a lot of work and I sold him on when he was 18 months' old but then, quite by chance, I was reading a horse deals magazine and I saw he was for sale again, in Codsall. That was it. I had to have him back.

He's technically black with a white blaze but he looks dark brown in summer, which is also when his mane grows really long. He has the Shire 'feathers' which look lovely when he runs – being designed for pulling he can trot for England when he gets going.

He really is a gentle giant although putting his tack on can be a bit of a problem – I have to stand on a stool!

A friend of mine owns a Clydesdale horse, so if we go out riding together we tend to make a bit of an impression!



Students rehearse for *The Threepenny Opera* by Brecht



Curtain goes up on new-look George Cadbury Hall

The University's George Cadbury Hall, built in the 1920s as a memorial to the great industrialist and philanthropist by his wife Elizabeth, has officially reopened after a refurbishment programme, marking the inauguration of a modern and flexible performance space.

Now home to the Drama and Theatre Arts Department, the theatre has been designed around the needs of teaching theatre and performance in a university setting in the 21st Century. This intimate space has flexible staging

options and the latest in electrical and stage equipment for training undergraduates. The staging allows many variations on the traditional proscenium arch and encourages students to be creative in thinking about their use of space.

The hall was originally built for the study of religious and social issues, for recreation, art, music, literature and drama. It had an auditorium to seat up to 500 people with an organ and facilities for showing films.

Dr Brian Crow, Head of the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts, says: 'Thanks to the

£1 million refurbishment the theatre is now excellently equipped to accommodate the public productions and in-house performances which are such an important part of our undergraduate and postgraduate work here at Birmingham.'

The re-opening was celebrated with a performance of *The Threepenny Opera*, by Bertolt Brecht, on March 20. The University's Chancellor, Sir Dominic Cadbury, formally re-opened the theatre, which was named after his grandfather.

In 2006, then PhD student Matt Cole, of the School of Historical Studies, wrote the University booklet, The George Cadbury Hall: a brief history. In the excerpt (below) he explains how the University's relationship with the Hall evolved.

In August 1999, the Hall was integrated into the University of Birmingham. It became the principal teaching space for the Performing and Visual Arts degree course of Westhill College, for which a new sprung dance floor was laid, covering the stage and orchestra pit. Groups from outside the University continued to stage events in the Hall: Birmingham Youth Dance Company held their summer show there – featuring 12 performances of around a dozen dancers each – in June 2000.

As the Hall approached its 80th anniversary, a new chapter opened in its history with the arrival, in 2006, of the Birmingham University Department of Drama and Theatre Arts, for whose 250 students and staff the Hall is a rehearsal and performance space...The University has committed a substantial sum to the development of the Hall, and it will be a focal point for the development of future joint projects with the adjacent BBC Drama Village.

On opening the Hall in 1927, Dame Elizabeth acknowledged that: 'no hard and fast rule could be laid down as to the uses of the hall'; but its future uses promise to fulfil its initial objects in a changing world as well as its past ones over the last eight decades.

The Queen Mother visits the Hall



Welcome to the world of Knowledge Transfer

Many important developments in Knowledge Transfer have been taking place at the University over the last 12 months, writes *Andy Mountain, Head of Commercial Development, Research and Commercial Services*. These include appointing a Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer (Judith Petts) and Directors of Research and KT for each of the five Colleges. A long-term University strategy for Research and KT will be published and widely communicated around the University during the next few months.

We have seen the creation of Alta Innovations Ltd, which provides services to Birmingham's academic staff for protecting and licensing intellectual property and for consultancy. A new Commercial Development Unit has been established within Research and Commercial Services – in which Alta Innovations has been co-located – with central University staff responsible for engaging business and developing the entrepreneurial culture, giving unified leadership for research commercialisation. Although we recognise that commercialisation of research is only one aspect of KT, this is the main focus of the Unit, which is based on the Birmingham Research Park.

I was recruited a year ago to lead this reorganisation and to put in place a clear strategy and infrastructure for research commercialisation. This is now well under way, and the Commercial Development team is being significantly expanded to provide more resources, skills and experience. These include resources for marketing the entire University business offer, for business intelligence, for fundraising to support research with commercial potential, and for spin-out activities.

Recruitment should be completed within a few months, when the Commercial Development team will have 20 staff.

The team aims to provide maximum support to all academics, schools and colleges in developing their research in a commercial direction. We are making considerable efforts to ensure effective teamwork between the Commercial Development unit and business development staff in the Colleges. A significant addition to the support mechanisms has been establishing the KT Development Fund, described on these pages.

You can also read case studies of KT initiatives from two of the Colleges, and we hope to highlight others in future issues of Buzz. I hope you find them interesting, informative and inspiring.

Innovative thinking – the new KT Development Fund

It has, for a while, been obvious to many of us in Research and Commercial Services that there is a funding gap between research funding and the access to funding for commercialisation. This gap often consists of the need for some basic proof of concept work to be done. In recognition of this, the Knowledge Transfer Development Fund has been set up by the Commercial Development team within Research and Commercial Services. This is a process for allocating small 'pots of money' to academics needing to move commercial projects forward. Under different strands of the fund, it is also possible to bid for funding for personnel to engage in KT activities and for events. This will allow schools and colleges to plan their KT activities in a flexible way drawing on their own internal resources, the Commercial Development Team and this fund.

All applications are reviewed by the Allocation Group which is made up of representatives from each of the five Colleges and from the Commercial Development Team with Judith Petts (Pro VC Research and Knowledge Transfer) as the Chair.

The first two rounds of funding have now been completed and 47 proposals have been submitted and reviewed with £482,000 being allocated across 22 projects. Funding has been allocated across all five Colleges.

The £1 million fund uses the University's allocation from HEFCE under the Higher Education Innovation Fund which is to be spent by July, 2011.

The remaining deadlines for this academic year are June 1 and August 1.

All information/application forms can be downloaded via the webpage www.industry.bham.ac.uk

For any further information, please contact Catherine Mansell; c.mansell@bham.ac.uk; Tel 0121 414 4905.

See future issues to find out about:

- The work being done in the School of Physics on innovative interferometers. Two instruments have already been sold and the inventors – working with Alta Innovations Ltd – are talking to potential licensees
- A new leadership model from the College of Social Sciences, with implications in the area of community regeneration needed due to the effects of the credit crunch

Dominoes with a difference

Dr Crayton Walker and Dr Pernilla Danielsson, from the College of Arts and Law, have been awarded almost £20,000 from the KT



Development fund for their latest innovation: 'Collocational dominoes'.

This is a suite of educational computer-based games. The game helps learners to acquire idiomatic word combinations (collocations) eg. take a risk, make a mistake; strong wind, heavy rain; come up with a solution, draw up a list, run into a problem.

The degree of difficulty of the game can be adjusted. An inexperienced player would be encouraged to select a low level of difficulty where the level of difficulty is based on the frequency of the combination. In the case of a low setting, the computer would accept low frequency combinations such as make an error. An experienced player would be encouraged to raise the level of difficulty.

In this case the computer would only accept highly frequent combinations ie. make a mistake rather than make an error.

The fact that the software is based around the game of dominoes makes it attractive both to young learners in the UK and to students learning English as a foreign language. The main feature which makes this product different is the fact that its content is based on corpus research.

The initial version of the game will be designed for use with one player who will be playing against the computer. The funding will be used to carry out market research and develop a prototype based on this information.

Keeping a weather eye on the roads

Every year snow and ice cause chaos across the country, and it's not possible to always grit all of the roads. Local authorities have to be able to accurately measure the state of their roads and this could become a much easier task thanks to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

The project linked Professor John Thornes, from Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, with Campbell Scientific, an innovative company based in the Midlands and specialising in data acquisition and meteorological equipment. During the three-

year project, KTP Associate David Hammond developed a road weather sensor to be part of a new Road Weather Information System. Campbell had not been involved in this market before but realised the sales potential in the UK and abroad for such a system.

Ten infra-red road temperature sensors were made, calibrated and tested during the project. The new IRIS system (Infra-Red Road Information System) was successfully field tested and marketed, attracting much interest within the UK and overseas.

The partnership achieved considerable

knowledge transfer from the University to Campbell Scientific regarding the global road weather market and the latest road weather research.



Celentyx founders Nicholas Barnes (CEO; right) and John Gordon (CSO; left), take a break from a business conference outside the Coronado 'Some like it hot' Hotel in San Diego.

Professor Barnes is also the Director of the Cellular and Molecular Neuropharmacology Research Group based in the School of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, College of Medical and Dental Sciences.

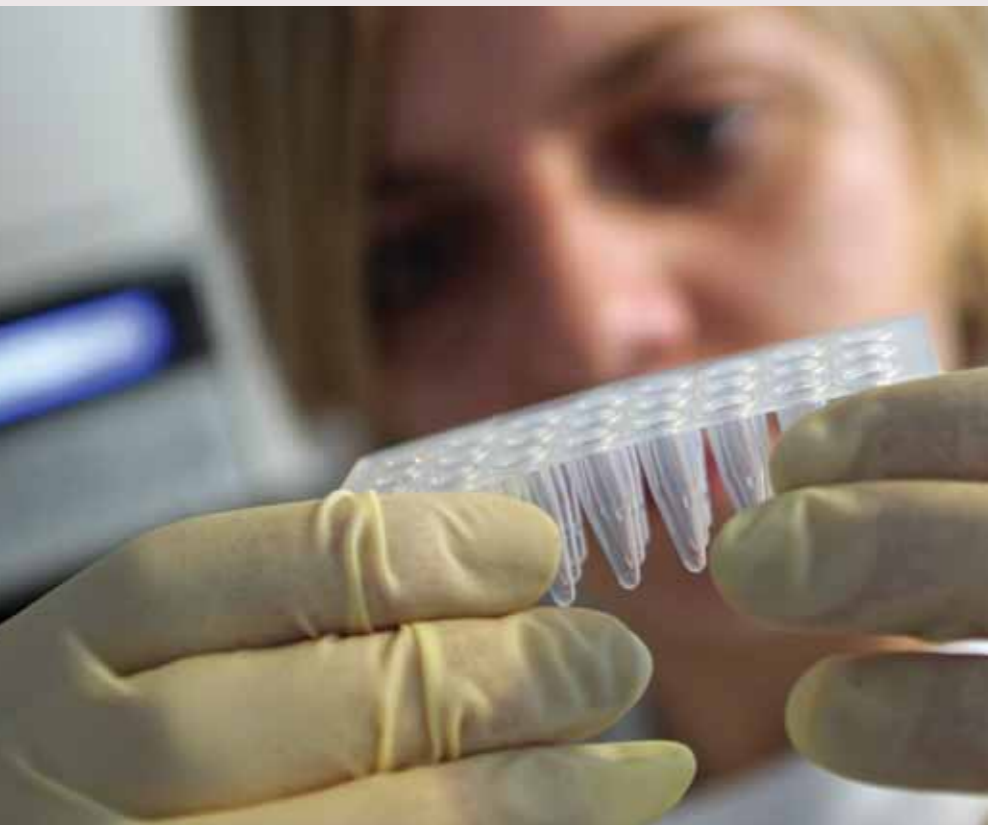
Life's a beach! An old drug-hunter's tale

Celentyx Ltd, a spin-out company from the University's Medical School, finds new clinical uses for established drugs. Given that most drugs synthesised by pharmaceutical companies never make it into man, yet burn millions of pounds before appreciation of the failure, the inherent risks of pharmaceutical research and drug development are huge. Celentyx's approach reduces this risk.

The platform fundamental to Celentyx's strategy – Novel Clinical Indication Profiling™ evolved from the academic laboratories of founders Professors Nicholas Barnes and John Gordon. Their cross-disciplinary academic collaboration started ten years ago by investigating the impact of neurotransmitters on the immune system – a long-recognised association but Nick, a neuropharmacologist, and John, an

immunologist, were the first to systematically study the interaction. Immediately, responses that had therapeutic potential were identified, which with the arsenal of established drugs to treat diseases of the brain – the fruits of years and billions of pounds of pharmaceutical research – meant that suitable drugs were readily available.

Says Nick: 'From day one we've had tremendous support from the University (which owns a third of Celentyx) and Jonathan Watkins (Alta Innovations). We are currently backed by venture capital and have struck a number of deals with other pharmaceutical companies. Even so, our growing cash burn means we'll need to get further investment soon, which will certainly be a test in the present economic climate!' Visit www.celentyx.com.



April/May highlights

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

www.events.bham.ac.uk

Conferences and seminars

European Research Institute: Future Seminars

The ERI Strategic Management Committee will be organizing a series of future seminars that will include topics such as, The Role of the Past in the Politics and Society of the Present, Politics and the Environment and Outsider's views of Europe. Anyone who is interested in attending and presenting please contact: Tim Haughton
Email: t.j.haughton@bham.ac.uk

Thursday 14 May, 10.30am–2.30pm Learning at Work Day

If you think that you never stop learning, find out more at the Learning at Work Day and sample taster sessions on offer. Open to all members of support staff
Venue: Law Building
Cost: Free
Contacts: Marian Jordan,
Email: m.a.jordan@bham.ac.uk or Niki Constantinou
Email: n.c.constantinou@bham.ac.uk

Sunday 14 Tuesday, 16 June The Concept of God and the Cognitive Science of Religion: An International Conference

Venue: Arts Building, Lecture Room 3
Cost: £20
 For registration details visit:
www.philosophy.bham.ac.uk/events/cogsci.shtml
Contact: Dr Yujin Nagasawa
Email: y.nagasawa@bham.ac.uk

Thursday 18 June, 10.00am Postgraduate Open Day

The Institute of Local Government Studies shows how a Postgraduate course can lead to a career in the public sector.
Cost: Free
www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk

Iraq conference

The School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion held a conference on the plight of Iraq's religious minorities on **10 March** at the John Kydd Room, Elmfield House, Selly Oak Campus.

Lectures

Thursday 30 April, 5.15pm Talking with Data: A Soothsayer's Tale

This lecture will be given by Professor Anindya Banerjee of the College of Social Sciences.
Venue: Birmingham Business School, Main Lecture Theatre

Wednesday 6 May, 5.15pm Oesophageal Cancer: Past, Present and Future

This lecture will be given by Professor Derek Alderson of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences
Venue: The Medical School, Leonard Deacon Lecture Theatre

Thursday 7 May, 5.15pm The Invention of Snobbery in Early Modern England

This lecture will be given by Professor Richard Cust of the College of Arts and Law
Venue: Arts Building, Lecture Room 6

For all of the above
Cost: Free
Contact: Karen Wright
Email: k.r.wright@bham.ac.uk

Thursday 7 May, 5.00pm Synonymy as a Syntagmatic Phenomenon

This is the fourth Sinclair Open Lecture in the new series and will be given by Antoinette Renouf of Birmingham City University.
Venue: Arts Building, Large Lecture Theatre
Cost: Free
Contact: Marilyn Washbrook
Email: m.c.washbrook@bham.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 414 5669

Tuesday 16 June, 6.30pm Baggs Memorial Lecture on the subject of Happiness

This year's lecture will be given by **Clive Anderson**, better known for Channel 4's programmes Who's Line is it Anyway and Clive Anderson Talks Back.
Venue: Great Hall
Cost: Free
Contact: Eleanor Leftwich
Email: e.g.leftwich@bham.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 414 2950

Miscellaneous

Monday 13 April Meet the new Vice-Chancellor

Professor David Eastwood will officially take over as Vice-Chancellor of the University on Monday 13 April.
 He is hosting an open event for all staff on Thursday 7 May at 12.30pm in the Great Hall in the Aston Webb Building. This is an ideal opportunity to come and hear what he has to say about his vision for future of the University. There will also be a 30 minute Q&A session so please give some thought to any questions you may want to ask and can in the time allowed.
 Please arrive in good time to be guaranteed a seat – this is not a ticketed event. The event will end at 1.30pm.

Thursday 30 April, 12.30pm The Economic and Social Impact of the Demise of Rover at Longbridge-Four Years on

This project aimed to understand how the loss of employment at Longbridge has affected former MG Rover workers, their families and their neighbourhoods over the longer term. This event will share the findings with you
Venue: Birmingham Business School, Room 108
Cost: Free, Registration is required
Contact: Yvonne Harley
Email: y.t.harley@bham.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 414 4956

Friday 1 May, 1.10pm Barber Lunchtime Concert

Featuring the Belfast Piano Trio
Venue: Barber Institute of Fine Arts
Cost: Free
Contact: Joanne Sweet
Email: j.e.sweet@bham.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 414 5791

Wednesday 6 May, 7.30pm Barber Evening Concert-FILM

The Full Monteverdi is a unique film based on Monteverdi's Fourth Book of Madrigals. The production explores the simultaneous break-up of six couples with a breathtaking performance by internationally acclaimed vocal consort, I Fagiolini.
Venue: Barber Institute of Fine Arts
Cost: £6, £4 Concessions, £3 Friends and Students
Contact: Joanne Sweet
Email: j.e.sweet@bham.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 414 5791

The Big Idea 2009 10 June

A Business Ideas competition for the Medical and Biological Sciences, open to academic staff, postdocs and postgraduate students.

For further details and our online application form please visit www.medicibham.ac.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications is 8 May 2009.

Calling all Vikings

The University is to host the fifth Midlands Viking Symposium on Saturday April 25 in the Arts Building. The day school, jointly organised by the Universities of Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham, brings together academics and non-academics interested in Viking Studies and includes talks from specialists on research as diverse as runes, mythology, the Old Norse language, Viking women and Vikings and Christianity. Places cost £27pp.
 For details email c.p.callow@bham.ac.uk.



Aston Webb anniversary lecture

To mark the Centenary of the opening of the Aston Webb Building by King Edward VII on July 7 1909 the Retired Staff Association (BURMA) has invited Christine Penney (former Head of Special Collections in the University Library) to give a lecture on the topic on **Wednesday 20 May 2009 at 2.00pm** in Aston Webb Lecture Room G33. Retired members of staff are also invited to the lunch preceding the talk, or to become full members of BURMA. Inquiries at least three weeks in advance to burma@contacts.bham.ac.uk or phone 0121 475 3589.

Accommodation to let

Edgbaston: Self-contained bed/sitter, private entrance, cable broadband. Off Pershore Road, convenient for Bristol Road bus. Kitchen shared with one other. £275 pcm inc. Contact Paul Hatton on 0121 414 3994 or email: p.s.hatton@bham.ac.uk.

Birmingham city centre apartment: One bedroom, fully furnished, washing machine, dishwasher. Designated parking space. £600 pcm. Contact: 07939 236313.

Holidays

4* Cornish Cottage (Bodmin Moor): Close to coast and Eden. Self-catering, prices start from £200 pw. Tel: 01208 821653 or for more information see: www.welltown-stable.co.uk.

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Kitchen and bathrooms (can just fit or can supply quality units cheaper than high street names), plastering, decorating, tiling, paving, driveways. No job too small. For a quality reliable service call Jon Doggett at Highgate Interiors on 07813 798014.

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Posy Simmonds views the collection of 18th, 19th and 20th century cartoons on show at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. The acclaimed author and illustrator was visiting the University to deliver a lecture: 'Madame Bovary/Gemma Bovary' organised by Professor Jennifer Birkett, of the Department of French Studies.