

Question Time

Susan Hunstan

1 What do you do?

I am currently head of the School of English, Drama and American Studies. My academic speciality is English Language / Applied Linguistics – my first job in the university was in the Centre for English Language Studies.

2 What do you really do?

In terms of research I work in Corpus Linguistics – this is a field of Linguistics that uses various kinds of software to examine (large amounts of) text in such a way as to make patterning and co-occurrence prominent. Corpus Linguistics has a lot of important applications – seeing how academics in different disciplines use language is one example – and it also encourages us to formulate new theories about how language works, for example seeing lexis (vocabulary) as more central to language organisation than grammar. At the moment I am writing a monograph about the relevance of Corpus Linguistics to the study of evaluative language.

3 How do you get to work?

On foot and by bus. I'm an expert on the 21 and 44 bus routes.

4 What's the best aspect of your job?

I love the variety in the job. No two hours in the day are ever the same, let alone no two days, so I am never bored.

5 What's the worst aspect of your job?

Emails asking me to get loads of information by yesterday.

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

I have no idea – career planning has never been my strong suit.

7 What do you most enjoy about University life?

You get the opportunity to work with very clever and very interesting people, both students and staff, from all parts of the organisation.

8 How do you unwind?

I find an hour or two of gardening really frees the mind.

9 Which book is on your bedside table?

I am a fan of crime and fantasy fiction. At the moment Sue Grafton's 'T is for Trespass' is beside my bed.

10 What is your favourite tippie?

Red wine.

11 What makes a good night out?

Good food and good company.



12 Which animal are you most like?

I suppose this must be my cat, as owners grow to be like their pets. She is always determined to get her own way and delivers a nasty scratch when crossed.

13 Describe your favourite holiday?

It would definitely involve coastal walks and a bit of adventure (of an unspecified nature).

14 What is your favourite sport?

I don't have one so I am rewriting the question. Ballet is my favourite art form.

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

Any of the novelists and poets taking part in the Birmingham Visiting Writers Programme. This is an annual event linked to our Creative Writing Programme. All the speakers have been interesting and delightful people. Plus I get to give the BVWP a plug!

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

I would be SuperAcademic – able to clear a week's work in a single day and with an infinitely elastic memory. Sometimes an invisibility cloak would be a bonus.

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

If I say 'giving my inaugural lecture', does that sound too dreadfully sad? Yes, I thought so.

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

Whatever it is that is killing the bees.

19 Describe yourself in three words?

Certainly not – it makes me sound like a dating ad.

20 What is your personal motto?

'One potato at a time'*

* A motto for getting a pile of disparate jobs done – however large the mound of potatoes is, you get through it by peeling one potato at a time.

3937 © University of Birmingham 2009. Printed on a recycled paper containing 50% recovered waste and 50% virgin fibre.

and finally...

Leading lady

UBSport's Lucy takes centre stage

May 2009



Digital wizard



Iron resolve



Question Time

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

YOUR BUZZ

Next edition
 Publication date: 10 June 2009
 Copy deadline: 19 May, noon

News, views, pictures, notices,
 adverts and events to:
university-buzz@bham.ac.uk

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

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

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

New employability service for research staff web page

As a research-led University, we are rightly proud of our staff who are at the forefront of cutting edge research activity. We want to do all that we can to highlight that ways in which we can support staff who work hard to maintain the University's reputation. That's why we are turning the spotlight on a new service for Research Staff: Career Management webpage for Research Staff: www.as.bham.ac.uk/researchstaff.

The Research Staff webpage is just one outward sign of the emerging Employability Service for Research Staff. The page offers a one stop signposting for all things related to maintaining the employability and advancing the careers of Research Staff.

The Employability Service for Research Staff (ESRS) is based at the Careers and Employability Centre, on the 1st floor of University Centre. A specialist self-service

Resource Library is already available. The ESRS also offers a Career Management Induction specifically tailored for Research Staff.

One to one Career Management and guidance counselling is available around the following:

- preparing for job promotion
- applying for new jobs
- preparing the researcher profile component of research applications

Why not plan a visit or make an appointment to talk about career advancement possibilities with Caroline Williamson, Research Staff Employability Consultant? Caroline is available on: c.williamson@bham.ac.uk or tel: 414 6009.

Visit the website soon and keep watching this spot. There's more to come...



Active Lifestyle registration

University of Birmingham Sport's Active Lifestyle class registration has started so if you haven't signed up yet, take a look at the UBSPORT website to see all the fantastic fitness and sport activities available, there really is something for everyone.

Signing up is easy, simply ensure you have your staff ID card and PIN number and click on the orange Book Online button on the UBSPORT website.

Corporate Relay Challenge

Challenge others, challenge yourself, then get ready for 17 June 2009.

The University of Birmingham Sport Corporate Relay Challenge is back for its third year! Proving hugely popular with staff in previous years, the evening of fitness, teamwork, camaraderie...and, of course, some healthy competition returns!

Everyone is welcome to enter, so get your workmates together to form a team; and while you're at it, why not throw down the gauntlet and challenge other departments too!

Four one-mile relays for men's, mixed and children's teams, three one-mile relays for women's teams.

You do the running and we'll provide a fun atmosphere and an evening to remember! The race will be followed by a BBQ and drinks in 'Raising the Bar'.

See the UBSPORT website for further details www.sport.bham.ac.uk.

AHRC visit

The University hosted a visit from three senior representatives of the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

For the leader of the group, Professor Shearer West, AHRC Director of Research, it was a return to familiar surroundings. The previous Head of Historical Studies, she is currently on secondment to AHRC from her home department of History of Art at Birmingham. She was accompanied by Jonathan Breckon, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, and Gary Grubb, Associate Director of Programmes.

The visit coincided with the launch of the AHRC 'Future Directions' consultation. Other areas discussed included the new AHRC fellowship scheme which replaces its research leave scheme and the Block Grant Partnership. There were presentations from AHRC funded researchers, past and present, and a poster competition for postgraduate students.

Professor Stephen Shute said: 'The AHRC is a major source of funding for arts and humanities research carried out at the University and the visit provided us with an opportunity to strengthen our already close relationship and to engage with the AHRC's vision for the future.'

Energy drinks work – in mysterious ways!

Runners clutching bottles of energy drink are a common sight, and it has long been known that sugary drinks and sweets can significantly improve athletes' performance in endurance events. The question is how?

Clearly, 'sports' drinks and tablets contain calories. But this alone not enough to explain the boost, and the benefits are felt even if the drink is spat out rather than swallowed. Nor does the sugary taste solve the riddle, as artificially sweeteners do not boost performance even when they are indistinguishable from real sugars.

Writing in the latest issue of *The Journal of Physiology*, Ed Chambers and colleagues in the School of Sport and Exercise Science not only show that sugary drinks can significantly boost performance in an endurance event, but so can a tasteless carbohydrate – and they do so in unexpected ways.

The researchers prepared drinks that contained either glucose (a sugar), maltodextrin (a tasteless carbohydrate) or neither, then carefully laced them with artificial sweeteners until they tasted identical. They asked

endurance-trained athletes to complete a challenging time-trial, during which they rinsed their mouths with one of the three concoctions.

The results were striking. Athletes given the glucose or maltodextrin drinks outperformed those on 'disguised' water by two to three per cent and sustained a higher average power and pulse rate, even though didn't feel they were working any harder. The authors conclude that as-yet unidentified receptors in the mouth independent from the usual 'sweet' taste buds must be responsible.

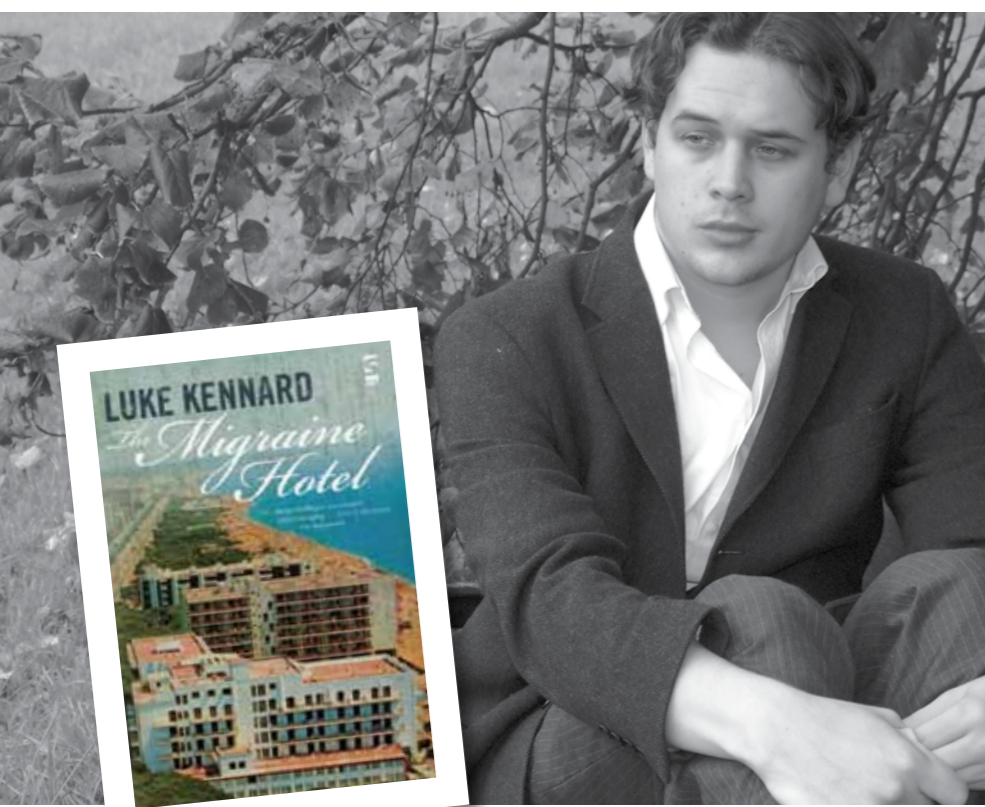
'Much of the benefit from carbohydrate in sports drinks is provided by signalling directly from mouth to brain rather than providing energy for the working muscles,' explains Dr Chambers.

The team found that both glucose and maltodextrin triggered specific areas of the brain associated with reward or pleasure, while the artificial sweetener did not. This acts to reduce the athletes' perception of their workload, suggest the authors, and hence enables them to sustain a higher average output.

Poetic licence

Luke Kennard, lecturer in Creative Writing in the Department of English, has been singled out as one of the top ten UK poets by *The Times*. Luke was nominated for the Forward Prize in 2007 for his second poetry collection, *The Harbour Beyond the Movie*, and his volume, *The Migraine Hotel*, has recently been published by Salt. He is now working on a pamphlet of new poems based on the UK's mental health service and is also writing a novel.

May's cover picture shows Lucy Hood, UBSPORT PR, Media and Promotions officer, as Florence in a scene from the 80s musical Chess. Lucy is a member of Bournville Musical Theatre Company, which is staging the production at Birmingham's Crescent Theatre next month. Full story, page 12.



Links to stimulate business research

The College of Social Sciences in partnership with Warwick Business School and Aston Business School has been given a £1.5m capacity building cluster award from the Economic and Social Research Council to fund over the next five years high-impact business-related research which directly links academic research to current business needs.

This is significant funding from the ESRC, which is a Government-funded body and the biggest in the UK for business-related research. The award has originated from the drive to support the UK skills economy to ensure that as a nation we remain competitive within the global marketplace.

The cluster project – Engaging Research for Business Transformation – seeks to engage with small and medium-sized organisations in the West Midlands operating within the energy, financial services and health technologies sectors.

The aims of the EREBUS project are to raise the research capabilities and capacity of the region by funding research to take place directly in the workplace or targeted to the organisation's needs. This will mean that a business can benefit from highly skilled individuals working with their organisation

to bring about innovation, creativity and practical application of knowledge.

Small and medium sized businesses can access a variety of resources and support through the following channels:

- CASE awards (three years) – which enable organisations to work with high caliber, dedicated PhD students
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (two to three years) – which allow top flight graduates to work in organisations on challenging initiatives beneficial to the graduate, organisation and the University
- Placement awards (three months each) – which allows research students to work for organisations for short durations
- A voucher scheme – allowing academics to work on short term (one or two weeks) consulting projects

The project is open to public or private sector organisations and the funding is accessible for projects that can be completed before the end of 2012. Organisations will need to meet funding criteria and for the CASE awards and KTPs an organisational contribution is also required.

Visit www.erebus-cbc.com/index.php

Engineers invent process to make foundries greener

Engineers at the University, with local company Ntec, have invented a casting process that could reduce the energy costs of light-metal foundries. The technology, called CRIMSON*, means that foundries need only heat the quantity of metal required to fill a single mould rather than whole batches that use unnecessary energy and create waste.

The UK is at the forefront of light metal casting and investment casting technologies, which are vital to the global aerospace and automotive industries. The energy efficiency of the casting process has never been investigated fully so a new research project run by the School of Mechanical Engineering will identify the energy use in traditional foundry processes and compare it with the University's new process that aims to reduce costs, energy usage and waste output.

Currently a typical light-metal foundry melts between 100kg to several tonnes of alloy in a range of furnace types. This liquid metal is held at about 700 degrees centigrade in a holding furnace before it is transferred to a ladle and poured into a casting mould. It can take roughly eight hours for the liquid metal in a batch to be used up and any leftover metal is poured off to be re-used or scrapped for re-melting or refining in a secondary processing plant.

The CRIMSON technique uses a high-powered furnace to melt just enough metal to fill a single mould in one go in a crucible. It transfers the crucible into an up-casting station for a highly controlled filling of the mould against gravity. This method only holds the liquid aluminium for a minimum time, reducing the energy losses incurred when

Climate change and transport blueprint

A team of scientists from the University has secured £1.5 million for a four-year project to examine how to make the UK's transport systems resilient to climate change.

With project partners the British Geological Survey, Hydraulics Research, the Transport Research Laboratory and the universities of Nottingham and Loughborough the team will look at what will be the nature of the UK's transport systems by the year 2050, making recommendations to ensure that it will be able to cope with the effects of climate change.

Civil engineers at Birmingham will investigate how our transport and its infrastructure will change over the coming decades and assess its resilience, taking into account the likely technological changes that will need to be built into the design of future systems in order to make them more robust for weather events such as strong winds and storms, heavy rain and high temperatures.

Researchers in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences will be devising future weather models to identify the kind of meteorological impacts that will affect the transport infrastructure.

Professor Chris Baker, lead investigator of the project from the School of Civil Engineering, says: 'Our research will impact on the decision making of Government, transport planners and managers as well as professional engineers.'

holding metal at temperature and removing the need for 'degassing' as other elements from the atmosphere are not absorbed or thick layers of oxide allowed to form. The castings produced are of a higher quality, leading to a reduced scrap rate and decreased re-melting energy costs.

Dr Mark Jolly, lead investigator, says: 'At the moment in the UK we use the equivalent of every man, woman and child each boiling a kettle twice a day every day of the year just to melt the aluminium for casting. It is hoped that the new process will be able to reduce this energy usage by one third.'

* CRIMSON stands for Constrained Rapid Induction Melting Single Shot Method.



The 2009 'Have your say' staff opinion survey Champions attend a reception in the Aston Webb Rotunda marking the survey's completion.

First view of 'Have your say' findings

The headline results of the 2009 Have your say staff opinion survey were presented to University Executive Board (UEB) at the end of April. The survey company, ORC International, will also supply a fuller report in the next few weeks.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood, is delighted with the response rate and is working with colleagues to develop a University-level action plan to address staff views. He said: 'Thank you to everyone who participated in this survey. We are fortunate to have a set of data that is both representative and statistically significant so we can have confidence in resulting action plans. There are some clear messages emerging already, and although 60% of respondents did not believe that the results will be acted upon, I can assure staff that UEB is determined to act on the findings and to keep you informed about progress.'

The results show that staff are highly engaged and are willing to go the extra mile

at work. The campus is seen as a real asset by a significant proportion of staff. However, some of the answers show that staff would like the senior management to be more visible and for the strategic direction of the University to be clearly communicated to staff. In addition, staff have indicated that poor performance is not always managed effectively. While Buzz is well read, findings suggest that there is further room for improvement in our internal communications.

More details of the findings, and some of the initial actions being taken to address them, will be available in the June issue of Buzz.

The final response rate of 56% is an excellent achievement. The project team organised a special thank you lunch for the team of local survey champions that helped to increase participation.

Once we have the full results, they will be made available to staff on the website and regular updates will be published in Buzz. See www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/consultation/haveyoursay for more.

Exploring 'Godly love'

A Birmingham academic has been awarded £103,000 to investigate the concept of Godly love among Pentecostals in the US.

Dr Mark Cartledge, from the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies at the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, has been awarded the two-year research grant by the John Templeton Flame of Love Award. He will work with Dr Kimberly Alexander, from the Church of God Theological Seminary, Tennessee.

The project also involves Dr James P Bowers, from the Centre for Pentecostal Leadership and Care, at the Church of God Seminary, Tennessee.

The award is one of five grants funded under the Templeton Flame of Love scheme in partnership with the University of Akron, Ohio.

Dr Cartledge's project will investigate how Godly love is understood and motivates action in the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian teachers visit

The Centre for Russian and East European Studies (CREES) hosted the Russian Teachers' Group annual Russian Teachers' Day in the European Research Institute, writes Claire Wilkinson, Teaching Fellow in Russian. More than 50 Russianists, from all over the country, attended and the keynote speech was given by retired Professor Tony Briggs (formerly Head of the Department of Russian until 1998). Natasha Rulyova, of CREES, also spoke about new media in Russia.

Cold atom centre

The School of Physics and Astronomy has officially opened its Ultracold Atom Research Centre, a £6 million facility funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. Physicists will now be able to use refrigerators made from light to produce coherent atom beams (like light in a laser) and then use them to create artificial materials, new entangled light fields or produce ultra-precise sensors for time or forces...

Professor Mike Gunn, Head of School, says: 'This Centre will allow Birmingham to make major contributions to the fastest developing area of physics.'

Guest curator

University Curator James Hamilton is guest curator of the exhibition 'Turner and Italy', which has opened at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh until June 7. It is a major international show of over 100 works, with loans from all over the world including the Tate, Louvre, Washington DC, Melbourne Australia, Dallas and Ottawa as well as Birmingham and Coventry. From Scotland it will go on for the summer and early autumn to the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest.

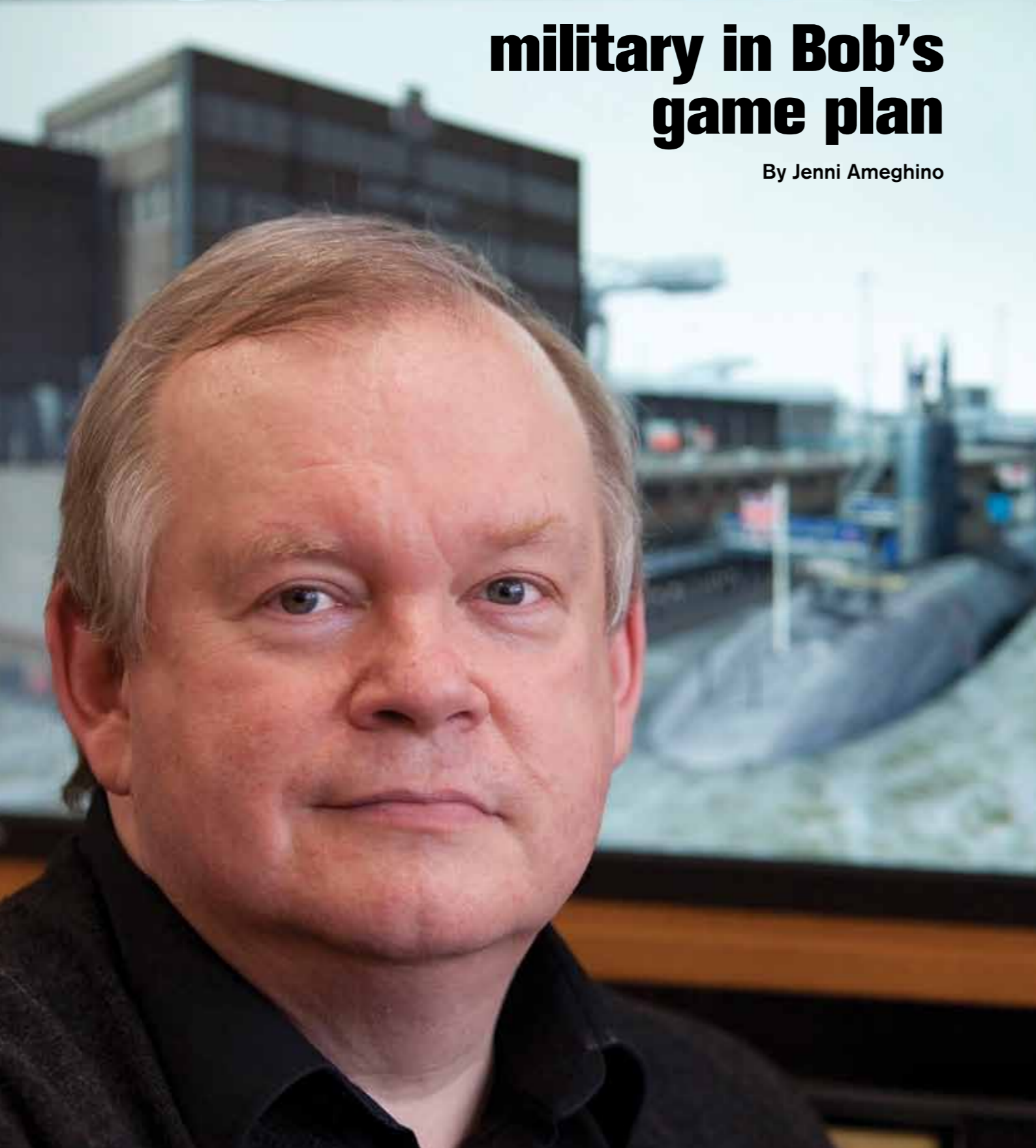
Fraud response plan

The Audit Committee has approved the University's Fraud Response Plan which is to be used for all suspected incidents of financial fraud to enable the institution to prevent further loss, gather evidence for disciplinary and/or criminal action, undertake investigations, recover losses and keep relevant people informed.

Sci-fi meets

military in Bob's game plan

By Jenni Ameghino



If the full-size Army mannequin, the virtual-reality helmets and the gas mask don't give away Bob Stone's line of research, take another glance around his orderly yet eclectically-decorated office. What about the Alien model on the filing cabinet, the scaled-down submarine on his desk, the Cossack Army flask, the leather bull-whip and the assortment of hand-held games consoles?

Still stumped? Think science-fiction meets the military, with a generous helping of digital wizardry, and you'd be almost there. For Bob is one of the world's leading experts in interactive games technology.

Be assured we are talking business, not pleasure, here. While it may sound like the kind of work in which you spend all day playing games with titles such as Call of Duty or World of Warcraft, this is not part of Bob's professional remit, even if he does enjoy playing them at home with his teenage son. His area of interest is a far cry from Lara Croft and more recent iconic avatars. As Professor of Interactive Multimedia Systems, who heads the Human Interface Technologies Team in the Department of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Bob explores how digital video technology can be exploited and developed to benefit humankind – particularly in the areas of defence and medicine.

With his team he applies the latest thinking in Virtual Reality technology to everything from archaeology to space science. One of their latest studies has involved adding smells to digital simulations so that soldiers preparing to be deployed in war zones or on, for example, a military submarine, can know what to expect.

Using a specially-designed, US-made scent palette linked to a computer, Bob's team can recreate authentic smells at the push of a button during simulation training. It might be diesel fumes, burning vehicles, leaking sewage and spent ammunition or a sprawling spice market, a roadside kebab stall and smouldering incense sticks.

When Army personnel are on patrol in, say, Afghanistan and Iraq, they sometimes point to subtle changes in ambience – such as new or 'missing' smells – that suggest

to them something may be about to happen,' he explains.

Creating on-screen simulations that have real elements, including sound, touch and smell, provides valuable hands-on training, which will hopefully save lives, he says.

Fondly known to the Birmingham researchers as Smell-o-vision, the scent box is powered by compressed air with an integral fan that distributes the scented molecules.

'The jury is currently out on the scent palette,' says Bob. 'It is featuring in new research looking at how smell adds to the sense of presence in virtual and serious games environments. For example, does smell play

'Creating on-screen simulations that have real elements, including sound, touch and smell, provides valuable hands-on training, which will hopefully save lives'

a role in post-traumatic stress therapy using virtual scenarios from the Middle East? But it's possible that this kind of technology will be incorporated into computer games within the next few years.'

Another strand of research stems from Bob's role as Research Director of the Human Factors Integration Defence Technology Centre. This was launched by the Ministry of Defence in 2003 to investigate – and encourage collaborative work into – technologies which might aid current and future defence capabilities. Today, Birmingham is a key player in the centre's ground-breaking research projects.

One of these, known as SubSafe, devises cutting-edge Virtual Reality simulations with interactive 3D content to train naval ratings, thereby improving the safety and efficiency of

operations on board Royal Navy submarines.

The Navy is close to Bob's heart. Born and bred in Plymouth, the son of a Devonport dockyard engineer, he recalls spending his formative years standing on the quayside there in the hope of finding his way inside a sub. His wish came true, eventually. Nowadays he spends much of his time working in such vessels as HMS Trenchant and his enthusiasm for subs is infectious. Once, he reveals, he passed a memorable night sleeping next to a Cruise missile in the torpedo room of HMS Tireless.

Other military research successes include devising a 'trauma trainer', a serious game which accurately mimics the conditions and emergencies that military medics might encounter in the field.

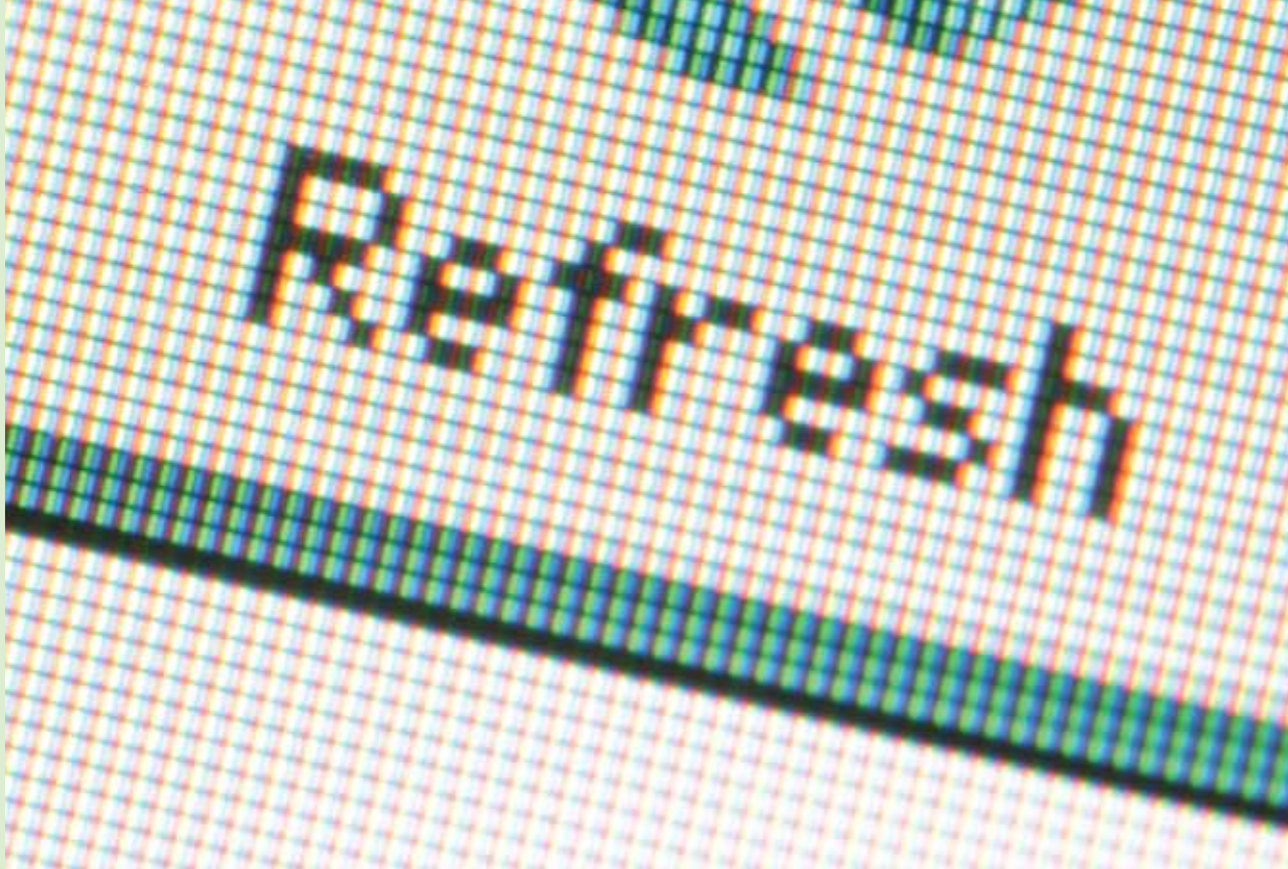
'It gives surgeons being dispatched to conflict zones the opportunity to practise making life-saving decisions and procedures. It also provides military personnel who are not skilled in this area with the training necessary to save lives.'

In the past, Bob has worked with the RAF on the introduction of new interactive training technologies for helicopter rear-door aircrew involved in search-and-rescue missions. He has taken part in a study to define the human factors aspects of manned and remotely operated systems, evaluated stress levels in diving supervisors, and looked at the effects of ship motion on naval personnel.

He has also contributed to a several 'world-firsts' in VR technology, including a simulator that trains doctors in keyhole surgery techniques.

This year, his work is expected to contribute to new initiatives in anti-terrorism plus developments in education following the success of a pilot Virtual Ecosystem project.

His penchant for military and sci-fi memorabilia having been explained, there is just time to ask about the origin of the Army flask. It turns out that, as an honorary professor at the State Technical University in Novocherkassk, southern Russia, he is also an honorary Cossack. The bull-whip is another story...



Bringing our website to life

The University website is changing. **Vicki Davies**, Director of Marketing and Communications, explains what's happening and why.

With over 250,000 visitors every year, and containing around 300,000 pages of information, the website is the University's biggest showcase to the world.

So, with the average person spending more time surfing the net than anything else other than sleeping and working – is the University's web presence the best it can be?

Technology has moved on considerably since the website was last reviewed in 2004. Since then a routine audit of our web presence highlighted some further issues but it was a specially commissioned review of the website that gave the University its sharpest wake-up call: providing evidence that it cannot afford to be complacent about how it is seen in the virtual world.

As a result, the Web Strategy Group (WSG), through the University Executive Board (UEB), formally agreed a nine-month web development project. 'This is a fantastic opportunity to show the academic strengths, tradition and the impact the University of Birmingham has on the world,' says Professor Michael Sheppard, Chair of WSG. 'It's a substantial project but one that will bring to life and reflect what goes on here in the virtual world of the Internet. Working together we can have a website that reflects our status as a world leading university – with a strategy and governance policy in place to ensure it is also sustainable.'

The project has four main strands:

- to establish a strategy that identifies and addresses audiences of importance
- to develop and implement a governance policy which has active management responsibility for the web presence and will ensure its sustainability

- to ensure that the technology and software behind the website is effective, compatible and appropriate and sustainable
- to create a core website which reflects the University's world-class status and provides a highly usable and intuitive journey for visitors to the site – whatever their needs

Next steps

The process begins with a series of six workshops, and a number of individual interviews, to capture views from the five colleges and Corporate Services. These, together with existing research and data, will inform the basis of the web strategy which will be approved by WSG and presented to UEB around the beginning of June.

Workshop delegates will be selected through College Boards or Senior Officers and as far as is practical, given the timescales, will reflect the different parts of the University community to ensure we identify key audiences.

As well as developing the strategy, the recommendations will also outline what comprises the corporate or core website so that work can begin on developing a governance policy, how to structure the site and then the new design before launch of the core site in the autumn and roll out to other areas next year.

More information about the project can be found at www.webstrategy.bham.ac.uk. There will also be a number of presentations and updates over the course of the project.



Image reproduced courtesy of the Birmingham Assay Office

By Andrew Davies

The economy in meltdown, money in short supply, the Government ordering the production of new supplies of money to underpin business... The current financial situation finds striking parallels in the exhibition *Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money*, which has just opened at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Matthew Boulton (1728–1809) is often considered the father of modern coinage – as well as the 'father of Birmingham' – as he was the first to standardise and mass-produce coins. This exhibition, opening during year of the bicentenary of his death, explores the art of making money in all its forms: as the production of fine art objects, as a mechanical process – and as the art of making a profit.

Boulton was one of the most important industrialists of the Industrial Revolution. A founder member of the highly influential Lunar Society, he worked with inventor and engineer James Watt, turning the latter's fledgling steam engine into a practical reality by harnessing it to machinery at his own Soho Manufactory in Birmingham in 1776 before selling it to the rest of the world.

In the 18th century, coins were becoming increasingly essential to individuals and businesses in a developing industrialised and urban society, and the cash economy was demanding small change at an unprecedented rate. But the Royal Mint was still using antiquated and inadequate methods of coin production, with low rates of supply and poor quality control. Counterfeiting was rife: it has been estimated that, in 1786, as many as two thirds of the coins in circulation were counterfeit.

Left coin:
Nottingham
Yeomanry Medal

Middle coin:
1791 Halfpenny Cornish
Penny Token Druid

Right coin:
Sierra-Leone Penny



'Father of modern coinage'

is honoured in Barber's bicentenary show

Entrepreneur Boulton, who had been producing small metal goods at his Soho Manufactory, solved the problem the Royal Mint had failed to address, creating a plentiful supply of small change. He improved design and manufacture dramatically, producing uniform, perfect coins – imperfection immediately signified a forgery.

From 1788, Boulton built the Soho Mint, harnessing Watt's steam engine to produce first-rate coins and introducing quality control in all aspects, from the supply of the metal, to the design of the coin dies, to the actual blank-cutting and coining processes. Soho was the first steam-powered mint in the world, with eight presses striking between 50 and 120 pieces per minute. Blanks were fed to the machines, and finished coins removed and counted automatically. Initially, Boulton produced exchangeable tokens for the local economy in many areas of Britain, and millions of coins for overseas customers in France, India, Africa and America, but in 1797 he finally won the commission from the British Government to produce 43 million copper 'cartwheel' pennies and, later, two-pence coins, halfpennies and farthings. His steam-powered minting presses were also exported all over the world.

This fascinating exhibition featuring examples from the huge British regal issues of 1797, 1799 and 1806–7, and also includes coins for other countries such as India, Sumatra, Ceylon, Bermuda and Sierra Leone. The exhibition also showcases the variety of tokens produced for customers from Britain and France, and the beautiful medals made to celebrate events all over the world. On display will be dies for two Nelson medals – the 1798 medal commissioned to celebrate Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile, and the famous 1805 Trafalgar medal.

Exhibits have been lent by the British Museum and Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, with the majority coming from the Birmingham Assay Office, most of which have never before been on public display.

Millions of images were made at Soho Mint at the end of the 18th century, and, in production terms, it could be argued that Birmingham became the art capital of the world.

Athletic medic's iron will to combat childhood disease

By Ben Hill



Photograph above by Professor Asker Jeukendrup.

Taunton (Tauny) Southwood is a man for whom sport and physical activity is more than just a hobby; it represents an important part of his research and a crucial issue for society at large.

The bike and cycle helmet propped against the wall of the office tell a story of a life in which physical activity matters. It plays a particular role in

the Professor of Paediatric Rheumatology's daily work with children suffering from arthritis (properly known as Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis – JIA); something that seems an odd contradiction, given the debilitating effects the disease has on children's joints.

'One of the key things we look at and that I emphasise to my patients is the importance of an appropriate balance of physical activity, exercise and rest in rehabilitation.

This kind of work is often underestimated, and for young people suffering joint pain the idea of being physically active can be extremely daunting. However, it can also be immensely beneficial in the longer term, which is why we work hard to make it part of patients' every day life.'

Along with the better rehabilitation has come an influx of more effective drug treatments. The last 20 years has seen methotrexate, which was originally developed as an anti-cancer drug, established as the gold standard for treatment of JIA. More recently, a range of new biologic agents has been developed that are intended to interfere with specific targets in the human immune system.

The Birmingham team has led development of a large-scale pharmaco-surveillance research project to monitor the long-term efficacy and side-effects of these new drugs. With a national database of more than 600 JIA patients, the team is able to provide a national perspective on treatment: 'By monitoring the effects of these new drugs over a long period we can understand not only how effective they are in "real world" situations, but also what the longer term consequences are likely to be. Very long-term studies are needed to understand the risks during the patient's lifetime and even for the next generation – the patient's children.'

It was while growing up in Australia that sport first became an important part of Tauny's outlook. He played Aussie Rules Football and cricket until deciding that the regular injuries that are part and parcel of Aussie Rules (including a broken collarbone, several fingers and nose

– three times) were not compatible with a burgeoning medical career.

Instead, he turned to long-distance running – completing the inaugural Adelaide marathon in 1979 and competing in one of the first organised triathlons in Australia in the early 1980s.

After that first event, triathlon was forgotten for almost 20 years until a conversation with friends in Birmingham convinced Tauny to become one of the early members of the BRAT (Birmingham Running and Triathlon) Club.

He has worked his way through various distance events (sprint, Olympic and half Ironman distance triathlons) to eventually compete at Ironman distance. This gruelling event involves a 2.4 mile (3.86 km) swim, a 112 mile (180 km) bike ride, and a marathon (26.2 mile, 42.2 km). It takes up to 16 hours to finish an Ironman triathlon, although elite triathletes can do it in eight to nine hours (like another BRAT – the current IM female world champion Chrissie Wellington – a Birmingham University alumna). Tauny's best time is 10:57, although he firmly believes he can do better.

He now coaches and competes with the club, which has benefited from the explosion of interest in triathlon. 'In those 20 years while I was on "triathlon sabbatical", the interest in the sport has increased massively – I think largely because people enjoy the variety that training for triathlon presents.'

Having spent time in Australia, Britain and Canada, Tauny has experience of three cultures with very different approaches to physical activity and sport. But he maintains that all three societies face a similar challenge:

'From my perspective it's very simple: exercise isn't merely a pleasure, it's something that ought to be embedded in our schools and throughout society.'

'The trends in obesity are going inexorably up and are not going to change unless people become more active. Despite popular perceptions, things aren't particularly different in the UK, Australia or the US. An emphasis on elite sport doesn't necessarily mean a more active general population.'

And there are occasions where research and triathlon come together: 'I was running with the club recently and a new member came over and said "hello, do you recognise me?" After some frantic brain-wracking, I realised that that he was a former patient, who I had treated for arthritis as a child over a decade previously. He told me that he was training for the Birmingham Half Marathon – which he has now completed in two hours – a remarkable effort considering the severity of his joint disease as a child.'

'From my perspective it's very simple: exercise isn't merely a pleasure, it's something that ought to be embedded in our schools and throughout society.'

By Day...By Night

Lucy Hood



By Day

I've been PR, Media and Promotions officer for University of Birmingham Sport for over three years. After graduating from here in 2005 with a degree in Psychology, I joined the UBSport team in March 2006.

Having been a keen member of the Rowing team while studying (as a cox – if you saw the height of me this wouldn't need pointing out!), sport at Birmingham has always meant a great deal to me, so promoting the great opportunities available and shouting about our students' regular incredible achievements comes easily!

As well as covering promotion of results and sport opportunities, I'm also involved in organising events and coordinating any media and filming requests. I've had to rope in our sports students to appear on *The Gadget Show* and *Embarrassing Illnesses* a number of times! During my time here I've been able to meet a few celebs, including Steve Cram, Kelly Holmes and Myleene Klass.

By Night

I've always been a huge lover of theatre and musicals, but before I joined Bournville Musical Theatre Company in 2006, my experience of treading the boards was limited to playing Gretel in *The Sound of Music* when I was nine!

A week after joining I was cast as a minor principle in *Follies* and a year later as a bride in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. Both of which went on to win 'West Midlands Show of the Year' so I'm incredibly proud to be part of such an acclaimed group.

Although I suffer with terrifying nerves before I go on stage, once I'm out there I feel at home and the buzz is incredible – particularly when we got a standing ovation at the end of our last production!

This year, much to my amazement, I have been cast in my first principal role and will be playing the lead, Florence, in the 80's musical *Chess*. Written by Tim Rice and Bjorn and Benny, from Abba, the part was made particularly famous by Elaine Paige and her single *I know him so well* with Barbara Dickson.

I rehearse two to three times a week, but my serious 'word learning' time has been on my walk to and from work. The music has been on my i-pod constantly for the last four months!

Pretty much the whole show is sung and I'll be on stage long periods of time so I'll be looking after my voice in the run up to show week – no cheering on sports teams for me!

Fellow UoB staff member, Chemical Engineer Joe Wood is also a member of the company. Amateur societies like ours rely on ticket sales to survive so I'm determined to sell as many as possible! So it's time for the shameless plug – PLEASE come and support us!!

* Chess is on at the Crescent Theatre in Birmingham city centre, June 2–6. Contact Lucy for more details and to book tickets l.hood@bham.ac.uk.



Who's who

in the unified administration?

The Leadership Group of the Unified Administration (LGUA) is made up of the Heads of Corporate Services and Heads of Operations in the Colleges. LGUA is chaired by Lee Sanders, the Registrar and Secretary. LGUA meets regularly to ensure that there is co-ordination between the professional and support services across the University.



Lee Sanders
Registrar and Secretary
PA: Kim Davies
T: 43977
E: k.m.davies@bham.ac.uk



Christine Abbott
Director of Planning
PA: Carol Taylor
T: 45486
E: c.taylor@bham.ac.uk



Sean Duffy
Director of IT Services
PA: Liz Jevon
T: 45869
E: e.d.l.jevon@bham.ac.uk



Peter Meredith
Head of Operations
College of Medical and Dental Sciences
PA: Mary Smith
T: 44047
E: m.e.smith@bham.ac.uk



Gill Ball
Director of Finance
PA: Valerie Woolford
T: 46082
E: v.woolford@bham.ac.uk



Charlotte Jarvis
Head of Operations
College of Arts and Law
PA: Val Harrison
T: 49007
E: al-hoctempadmin@adf.bham.ac.uk



Heather Paver
Director of HR
PA: Jayne Thatcher
T: 43649
E: j.l.thatcher@bham.ac.uk



Ian Barker
Director of Estates
PA: Karon Brindley
T: 45951
E: k.brindley@bham.ac.uk



Marcella Keher
Head of Operations
College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
PA: Carol Witherwick
T: 44176
E: c.a.witherwick@bham.ac.uk



Carolyn Pike
Director of Legal Services
PA: Jane French
T: 43916
E: j.e.french@bham.ac.uk



Nick Blinco
Director of Development and Alumni Relations
PA: Cheryl Needham
T: 46682
E: c.needham@bham.ac.uk



Tracey Lancaster
Director of Corporate Relations
PA: Marilyn MacKenzie
T: 47179
E: m.e.a.mackenzie@bham.ac.uk



Charlotte Wellington
Head of Operations
College of Social Sciences
PA: Wendy Spurr
T: 48965
E: w.p.spurr@bham.ac.uk



Brendan Casey
Director of Academic Services
PA: Yvonne Evans
T: 43807
E: y.a.evans@bham.ac.uk



Sue McClaran
Acting Director of Hospitality and Accommodation Services
PA: Angela Perry
T: 46229
E: a.perry@bham.ac.uk



Gideon White
Head of Operations
College of Life and Environmental Sciences
PA: Lesley-Ann Boyle
T: 43615
E: l.a.boyle@bham.ac.uk



May/June 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

Wednesday 10 June, 1pm Graduate School Research Poster Conference 2009

This will be the third annual Graduate School Research Poster Conference and is an exciting opportunity to learn more about the diverse range of research at the University and to talk to PhD students about their work.

Venue: Chancellors Court

Cost: Free

Contact: posterconference@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Saturday 4 July, 9am Research Student Conference 2009

Education Research, Education Researchers: Diverse Experiences and Perspectives. The keynote speaker for this conference is Professor John Furlong of the University of Oxford.

Venue: School of Education

Contact: D.P.Lees@bham.ac.uk

College Assemblies

Wednesday 20 May, 1–2pm Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS)

Venue: LT Haworth 101

Wednesday 20 May, 2–4pm Social Sciences (SS)

Wednesday 10 June Life and Environmental Sciences (LES)

Wednesday 24 June Arts and Law (A&L)

Venue: LT 1 Law Building

Wednesday 8 July, 1–2pm Medical and Dental Sciences (MDS)

Venue: Leonard Deacon LT

Inaugural lectures

Thursday 28 May, 5.15pm Journeying Toward the Centre of Gravity

This lecture will be given by Professor Clive Speake of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Venue: Poynting Physics, Large Lecture Theatre

Cost: Free

Contact: Karen Wright

Email: k.r.wright@bham.ac.uk

Thursday 4 June, 5.15pm In Search of Leadership. What is it? Where is it?

This lecture will be given by Professor Christopher Mabey of the College of Social Sciences

Venue: Business School, Main Lecture Theatre

Cost: Free

Contact: Karen Wright

Email: k.r.wright@bham.ac.uk

University Centre foyer sales

May

13: Kist Jewellery

14: Beauty Products

15: Select Silver

19: Moda Jewellery

20: Bazaar El-Menyiy (gifts from Morocco)

Baggs Memorial Lecture on the subject of Happiness

Tuesday 16 June, 6.30pm

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 4142950



Miscellaneous

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

or Niki Constantinou

Email: m.a.jordan@bham.ac.uk /

n.c.constantinou@bham.ac.uk

Monday 8 June, 5.30pm Baroness Helena Kennedy QC to deliver Fircroft Centenary Lecture

Fircroft College is a specialist adult residential College that provides educational opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged and excluded members of society.

The lecture entitled 'Unfinished business in widening participation: the end of the beginning' will be given by Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, President of The Helena Kennedy Foundation which aims to tackle injustice and social exclusion through education and supporting disadvantaged students from the further and adult education sectors.

Venue: The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Cost: Free

Monday 8 June, 2pm University Services Forum

Venue: Great Hall

All administrative technical and support staff are encouraged to attend.

Saturday 13 June, 7pm. Sunday 14 June, 2pm. Monday 15 June, 7pm

Summer Festival Opera, Strauss-Die Fledermaus

Johann Strauss's most celebrated and popular operetta is full of mistaken identities, flirtation and confusion of all kinds. Join Baron von Eisenstein and his companions for an evening of fun and frivolity at the masked ball as Die Fledermaus's plan for revenge unfolds.

Venue: The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Cost: £13, £9 Concessions

Contact: Joanne Sweet

Email: j.e.sweet@bham.ac.uk

Tel: 01214145791



Melting moments at Fairtrade event

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight celebrations got off to a fantastic start with the ever-popular Wine Tasting event. Almost 100 staff and students attended the presentation given by Rob Price, from the Birmingham Wine School, and tasted various Fairtrade wines from a variety of Fairtrade wine producing regions.

The Ethical Buffet on March 2 attracted around 60 guests who enjoyed a three course ethical meal for only £7 per head! Main courses included a Moroccan Lamb Tagine with Fairtrade apricots, Fairtrade Quinoa flavoured with peppers and herbs, and strips of chicken in Fairtrade vegetable scented cous-cous. Desserts were delicious cakes made with Fairtrade chocolate, bananas and sugar. And, of course, there were the yummy Fairtrade banana and peanut butter rolls!!

Other events included a film night and a band night – both were again very well attended. The Ethical Trade Society raised a staggering £1000 for the Fairtrade Foundation from this year's events – well done to them!



Carl Chinn celebrates Centenary at the University of Birmingham

Tuesday 7 July 2009 marks 100 years of the opening of the Aston Webb Building at the University of Birmingham.

This evening event (start time approx. 6.30pm) will include a talk by Carl Chinn on the history of the building and the impact of the University on the city of Birmingham. There will also be the opportunity to enjoy an evening picnic on the lawns of Chancellor's Court – weather depending!

Full details around this event are not yet confirmed but please visit www.events.bham.ac.uk for the most up to date information.

Accommodation to let

Selly Oak: House to rent. Lovely 3 bedroom house, new electric wiring and boiler. On 44 bus route, walking distance from University and local hospitals, off-road parking. Available now. £625 per month. Contact Zoe. Tel: 07816 828393.

Kings Heath: Comfortable en-suite including five days' breakfast and personal washing. Suitable for member of staff, preferably male. Rent £80pw. Tel: 0121 444 6303. (after 6pm).

Holidays

Pembrokeshire: House in Little Haven to let June, July, late September. Equipped for eight. For details, ring 0121 440 1169.

Portugal, Central Algarve: 2 bedroom/2 bathroom apartment, private roof terrace, BBQ, shared pool, close to Albufeira. Tel: 07713 252947; Email: charlecy@hotmail.co.uk.

Services

Class One Maintenance Services.

Plastering, carpentry, kitchens, bathrooms, painting and decorating, brickwork, tiling, hard landscaping, etc. Fully qualified and insured, friendly and professional service. Tel: 07976 678863 / 0121 441 3344. Email: andy.classone@gmail.com.

Just Sew. All alterations, garments made to order also soft furnishings. No job too small. Tel: 07866 973 011/0121 4596 046.

Fun day at Barber

This year the Barber Institute's spectacular fun day for all ages – Family Open Day – is on **Saturday 30 May** from 10am to 5pm.

This year the Barber welcomes you to the great outdoors, as the theme is Art, Music and Landscape. The great French landscape painter Claude Lorrain will entertain visitors to his studio, Art Alive! introduces Prins Eugen of Sweden, whose work features in the current exhibition Northern Lights, while storytelling will be provided by a trio of woodland nymphs.

For adults, Barber Director Ann Sumner will be taking visitors on a walk through some of the landscapes in the Barber collection, while, the family concert

Need editing? Professional journalists will polish your text to the highest standards. Re-writing/editing/proof-reading tailored to your needs and budget. Email: words@edityou.co.uk.

VHS to DVD transfers. £15 per tape any length. Option to print photo on disk. Phone Anne 0121 742 2173 or email workerbee@talktalk.net.

JWBray Carpentry: Fully qualified, friendly carpentry service; doors, frames, skirting, decking, stairs, architrave, storage solutions etc. Free quotes. Tel: 07886 414908 / 0121 2583553. Email: JWBray@contractor.net.

Have those jobs done now. Large or small. No mess. No VAT. Guild of Master Craftsmen member. Paul Davis: 0121 4277179.

Menopausal symptoms? In the Midlands? Survey: please inform us of your experiences to help women's health. Gemma Pearce GSP898@bham.ac.uk.

Tax return still in the in-tray? Mynette & Co (est 1976) offers a local, personalised accountancy/tax advisory service. Tel 0121 449 7322, email a.mynette@btinternet.com.

No Angels (don't let the name put you off!) staff women's 6 a-side football team are looking for new players. We are a friendly bunch with an enthusiastic coach who aim to train once a week and play once a week during term time. We also get together for occasional socials during the year. Experience not essential. For more information please contact Jayne Green j.h.green@bham.ac.uk or call 42751.



is The Carnival of the Animals by Sain-Saëns – and there's also some fantastic Dixie jazz to round off the day.

As usual, there are many things to make and take home, as well as an enjoyable round-the-building quiz. More details at www.barber.org.