

June/July 2018



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Teaching
with tech

Pro-Vice-Chancellor's *view*



Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Kathy Armour

YOUR BUZZ

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Front cover image: Joe Berry, Professional Services lead on the Educational Technology stream of the Collaborative Teaching Laboratory.

The New Academic Teaching Year (NATY) – What, Why, When, How.

In June, Senate will consider a proposal to rebalance our academic teaching year. The structure of our teaching year has served us well for many years, so why are we proposing a new model? What is this new model, and how will we ensure the change is implemented effectively, if approved?

There are four key features of the proposed NATY:

- 1) Retaining the 11 weeks of teaching for each semester, but with the addition of more time for assessment support in both Semesters One and Two;
- 2) Inserting a formal, centrally supported examination/assessment period at the end of Semester One, and an inter-semester week between semesters;
- 3) Explicit recognition of the 'summer period' to acknowledge all the teaching/student-related work that is already undertaken during that period (countering the myth that staff are all on holiday for the whole summer);
- 4) The introduction of a new, campus-wide student enrichment week during the inter-semester week (while academic staff are busy marking).

This is not a radical departure from our current model. It has been designed to offer maximum benefits with the least possible disruption. Further detail, including a week-by-week schedule, can be found on the intranet.

There are five main reasons for proposing this change.

Our existing model is based on the premise that teaching takes place across two terms, with summative assessment for both terms taking place in the Summer Term. Over time, however, Schools have introduced more exams in January, and also summative coursework at the end of term one. As a result, the Summer Term is not being used for students, as was originally planned.

Secondly – given the amount of local assessment now happening in January – there is a pressing need for a formal, centrally supported examination/assessment period.

In some Schools, staff and students are under immense pressure in January, in what has become an unbalanced academic year.

Thirdly, we have recognised that with changes in assessment patterns, our current structure is illogical. When teaching in term one is assessed by coursework, students submit the assessment immediately after term one and receive feedback to help them in term two. Yet, where a term one module is assessed by a centrally scheduled examination, students wait until the Summer Term to take the exam, so they get no immediate feedback on progress.

Fourthly, our current structure is very restrictive. The number of Joint Honours programmes has dropped year on year, and we can't offer Major-Minor or interdisciplinary options that are common elsewhere.

Lastly, we will need to become more flexible in our delivery to accommodate new part-time learners, increasingly flexible degree apprenticeship models and more student mobility options. A whole year abroad is very expensive and we should offer shorter, single-semester opportunities that are accessible to a wider range of students.

If approved by Senate, this change will come into effect from 2020/21, which gives us time to work through all the implications. We have not yet published term dates for 2020/21 and therefore we comply with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). It is also important to see this change alongside the improvements we are making to timetabling, the student record system and the development of a digital module catalogue.

Continued from page 2

To deliver effective change we have engaged an independent consultancy company to conduct an impact assessment of the NATY; to compare our teaching year with major national and international competitors, and to consider the implications for its implementation. We have since refined the model in response to feedback, communicated with all staff and held open 'town-hall' meetings. I am pleased to report that the proposed model has received broad support and it has been recognised that it is similar to models already operating successfully at other research-intensive universities in the UK and abroad.

Following approval by Senate we will:

- Implement a major change management project led by a dedicated change management team to work through the implementation strategy;
- Keep you updated through our ongoing communications strategy;
- Ensure that we learn from the experiences of the many other universities in the sector that already operate a similar model;
- Designate the 'enrichment' and assessment support weeks as separate projects and co-design them with our students;
- Dedicate Education Enhancement Fund projects to support staff who want to develop innovative programmes that are made possible by the NATY.

I look forward to working with you all to deliver the NATY effectively, and to take advantage of all the new opportunities it offers.

Kathy Armour,
PVC Education

JOINT FELLOWSHIPS

We are delighted to announce that the call is open for University of Birmingham UK and Nanyang Technological University Institute of Advanced Studies Fellowships.

This new IAS joint fellowship programme aims to attract outstanding early and mid-career researchers from global leading institutions, operating at the cutting edge of their disciplines to work collaboratively with colleagues at the University of Birmingham UK and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

The deadline for applications is 2 July 2018 and full details can be found on the IAS website.



BIRMINGHAM EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS ENGAGE IN FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATION WITH SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MINDS IN A BOUNDARY-BREAKING COLLABORATION IN SINGAPORE.

Do the radically different ways that natural sciences, social sciences and humanities use the term 'law' have crossing points?

Can transdisciplinary debate on when to adhere to and when to break these laws contribute to real-world problem-solving?

Mentors primed discussions with provocative lectures on the meaning of law in their respective disciplines. David Gross (UC Santa Barbara) and Michel Spiro (CERN) addressed the laws of physics; Penny Andrews (University of Cape Town) – legal systems; Sir Partha Dasgupta (University of Cambridge) – economics; Michal Feldman (Tel Aviv University) – computer science; Patrick Geary (Princeton Institute for Advanced Study) and Wang Gungwu (National University of Singapore) – history; Gil Kalai (Hebrew University) – mathematics; Atul Parikh (UC Davis) – biomedical engineering; Ernst Rank (TUM Munich) – building informatics; and Ada Yonath (Weizmann Institute) – biology.

Although the meeting generated animated discussion and some serious tensions between disciplines, there was a shared desire to listen and a wonderful spirit of cooperation. Participants developed a common mission to test the extent to which professionals with widely divergent expertise could pool their disciplinary backgrounds to focus on clarifying specific problems specified by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

“ This fantastic collaboration between The Institutes of Advanced Studies at Birmingham and Nanyang Technological University Singapore gave us the opportunity to bring together 19 early-career scientists, engineers, social scientists and humanities researchers from six continents, with 11 global leading thinkers, including two Nobel Prize winners from across the world to debate these issues over six intense days in Singapore. ”

IAS Director, Mike Hannon

“ At interim meetings at Princeton IAS and the Technical University of Munich the fellows will work with us individually and in small groups to develop the implications of their insights. ”

Our planning is well underway for March 2019 – when the fellows and mentors reconvene at Birmingham's Institute of Advanced Studies, to present the results of this unique experiment and the most effective way of disseminating our findings. ”

Sue Gilligan, ICA coordinator

Distinguished University chemist elected as Fellow of the Royal Society



Royal Society – Newton, Einstein, Rutherford, Charles Darwin – people who I can only hope to sweep up the crumbs off their scientific table. I also think it's a great honour for the people who've worked with me... the 40 or so graduate students over 30 years, the post-docs and even the technicians, who've really played an important role in developing our experimental research.'

Congratulations to Professor Tim Softley, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer, who has been honoured with a Fellowship of the Royal Society for his advances in two areas of Chemical Physics.

The highly prestigious Fellowship is made up of the most eminent scientists, engineers and technologists in the UK and the Commonwealth, with approximately 1,600 Fellows and Foreign Members,

including around 80 Nobel Laureates.

Each year up to 52 Fellows and up to ten Foreign Members are elected from a group of around 700 candidates who are proposed by the existing Fellowship. Professor Softley joins prominent recipients such as Isaac Newton, Stephen Hawking and Alun Turing. On his election, he said:

'It's really quite a humbling experience to look at the list of former Fellows of the

The new Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

New data protection laws came into force on 25 May. This is the combination of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the new Data Protection Act.

At the University, the GDPR Working Group has been working with Colleges and Professional Services to deliver key objectives to fulfil the regulatory requirements. Wherever possible we are embedding these new obligations within existing processes and procedure to minimise the impact.

Information and resources are available at intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/dataprotection. This includes information on the new requirements for Data Protection Impact Assessments and template privacy notices. The privacy notices (available at www.birmingham.ac.uk/dataprotection) confirm how we process certain types of personal data at the University and include how

long we should keep that information. It is important that the privacy notices are issued whenever the University collects personal data; from students (eg, on registration), from a member of staff (eg, on joining), or a visitor (eg, when buying an event ticket).

To support staff, an introductory video on Data Protection is available at <https://youtu.be/SSNSW3SdZ8g> together with new Data Protection online training through Canvas. If, having looked at the resources, you still have further questions, or would like a member of the GDPR team to come and speak to your School please email legalservices@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

BIRMINGHAM AND HARYANA SIGN AGREEMENT ON CLEAN COLD FOR INDIA



The University of Birmingham and the State Government of Haryana have signed an agreement to advance the use of 'clean cold' technology in India and help meet rising demand for cooling sustainably.

The agreement will see a collaboration to develop centres of excellence for clean cold chains. Two special clean cold workshops take place over the summer – one in India and one in the UK – that will help to map out a blueprint and delivery plan for sustainable cooling across the north Indian state and beyond.

The agreement follows the world's first-ever Congress on Clean Cold held at the University of Birmingham last month and supported by the University's India Institute and the Birmingham Energy Institute.

Professor Robin Mason, University of Birmingham Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) and interim Director of the India Institute, commented:

'Our India Institute affirms the University of Birmingham's deep and continued commitment to engagement with the country. This agreement with Haryana is a great example of how we can contribute to Indian society, as our researchers forge links with their counterparts that will change millions of lives for the better.'

ROYAL-TREE

The Oaks Day Nursery has been celebrating the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle by planting their own commemorative tree. Scott McGill, from Grounds and Gardens, and his team helped the children at the Nursery to plant a cherry tree in celebration of the royal wedding. All of the children worked extremely hard in burying the roots and then watering it. The children have chosen to call it Harmeg.



Pictured from left to right; James, Amy (Senior Practitioner), Beatrix, Isobel, Penelope, Becky (Deputy Nursery Manager), Theo and Nick (Grounds and Gardens)

BRUMHAUS DRAWS OUR HOUSE

The University commissioned local artist, Alex Edwards of Brumhaus to create a bespoke piece of artwork to capture the striking beauty and inspirational surroundings of campus. *Buzz* spoke to Alex about his work and his inspiration for capturing campus and the city.

What brought you on to campus?

The Student Recruitment and Marketing team commissioned me to create a bespoke print of campus to use in their recruitment campaigns, showcasing the Edgbaston campus on bags and poster prints.

Who or what are your influences for your unique style?

I think you can see the influence of Constructivism and Cubism in my work, but it's not something I'm conscious of when I create new art. I particularly like Picasso and Bauhaus artists such as Josef Albers, Anni Albers and Paul Klee. With my style I play around with perspective to create a new way of seeing places and spaces, and reduce forms to simple, geometric shapes, eliminating the non-essential details. I think my process is pretty unique as my work is initially sketched out in a deconstructed way. Once I have a composition I'm happy with I then work on it digitally, which gives it distinct characteristics.

Why do you think our campus is such a stimulus for local artists?

The campus has an impressive mix of beautiful, old, redbrick buildings, some modernist architecture and new buildings, too. I think there are interesting views to be had at every turn.

Most people in Birmingham probably know Old Joe and the Aston Webb Building, which are very distinct and picturesque; the whole campus has got its own identity.

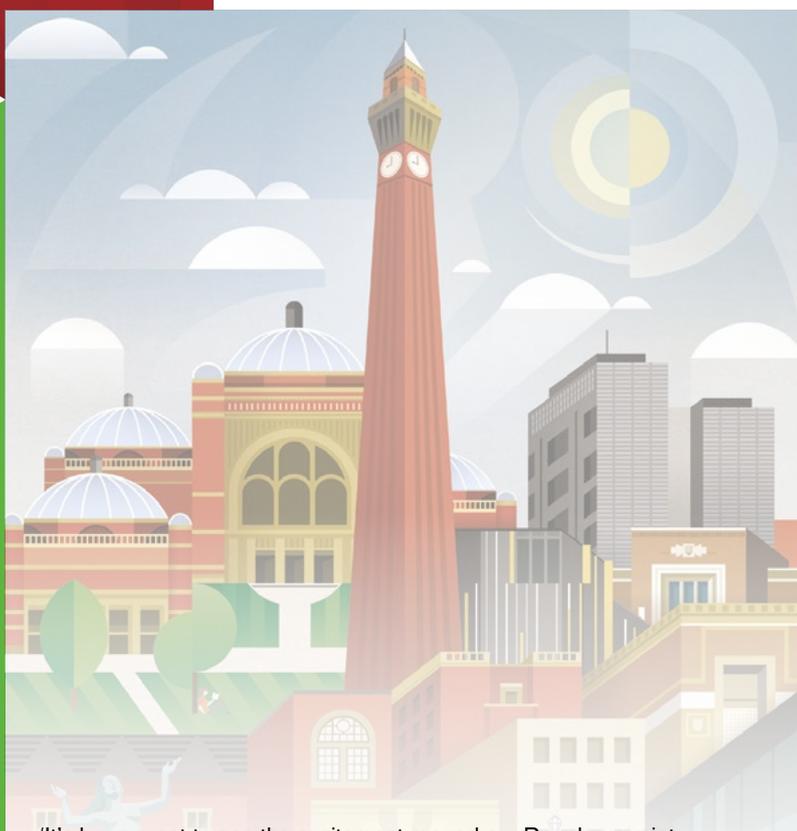
Tell us about some of the standout details and buildings you found while researching?

Old Joe is so dominant on the campus skyline and is pretty unique. I love the domed roofs, the mini turrets and ramparts. The windows on the redbrick buildings and the brickwork patterns high up on the Bramall building are great. With this work there was an overall idea of the prominent buildings coming together to create a montage; something more than a map of locations.

For anyone associated with the campus, it's full of memories and experiences and hopefully my new print evokes that feeling when people see it.

What has been your favourite building or scene to create in the city so far?

My favourite would be the 'From Digbeth With Love' print. I think it's the most recognisable view of Birmingham for most people and I think it's my best work to date.



'It's been great to see the excitement around our Brumhaus print, especially on social media. We knew it would be well-received by our current students and alumni, who were extremely excited about the print when we launched it – and the feedback has also been fantastic from our prospective students and visitors. We've shown how the University celebrates and uses local talent within the city and this is a unique way to depict campus and demonstrate why we're known for having one of the most beautiful and striking campuses in the UK.'

Claire Hawkins, Postgraduate Marketing Manager

What have you got planned next?

I'm halfway through a commission for a local architectural company. After that, I'll be looking at creating a print of St Philips Cathedral at Cathedral Square on Colmore Row (that's Pigeon Park to the locals!).

We are pleased to share this art with you in the form of a postcard, but if you would like one of Brumhaus's signed prints for corporate gifts, please contact: Claire Hawkins c.e.hawkins@bham.ac.uk or Francesca Peach: f.peach@bham.ac.uk

If you'd like a print for yourself, Alex also has a store on Etsy and has kindly provided a 10% discount for staff at the University. Just enter the following code: **UNISTAFF10**

View Alex's work: www.brumhaus.uk/
Don't forget – if you are going to send the postcard to family or friends ask them to share it on Twitter with [@buzzunibham](https://twitter.com/buzzunibham)

THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES – FROM GOLD COAST TO BIRMINGHAM

Following the success of 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia, we took the opportunity to have a look back and revel in the experiences of our University of Birmingham representatives who experienced the Games this year.

With the baton officially passed over to Birmingham to host the next Games, the next four years are certainly going to be busy to get the city ready for the 22nd edition of the international multi-sport event. As the venues across the region will welcome over 5,000 athletes across the Commonwealth's 71 nations and territories, and an 80,000 strong workforce including 15,000 volunteers, the University of Birmingham will play an important role when the Games come to Birmingham between 27 July and 7 August 2022. As the hosts of the squash and hockey venues, and an important training venue for other sports such as swimming and athletics, we caught up with Sarah McDonald and Zena Wooldridge OBE, to hear their thoughts on their Gold Coast experience and what that means for Birmingham 2022.

Sarah McDonald (pictured) is a fourth-year medical student, who has managed to work her studies around being an international track athlete, representing Team England at the Gold Coast in the 1500m, where she achieved 8th in the final. We asked her about how it felt to represent her country and the challenges and sacrifices she made to get there.

Your selection to be a part of Team England at the Commonwealth Games must have been a dream come true?

It was a very special experience for me. Four years ago I didn't even think that it would be a possibility to be going to Australia and competing for my country in a major Games. The atmosphere was electric in the village and on the track and it was great to be a part of that. It gives me a real stepping stone looking ahead to the Olympics in 2020 too.

If you had to pick one, what will be a memory from the Games that will stay with you forever?

Other than holding a koala? The atmosphere at the stadium was pretty special, I had a few Australians in my heat (and also final) so they really got behind the race and the noise was loud!

Considering the difficult decision you had to make to defer your studies, how do you feel post-Games and what's your plan of action going forward?

It's a very tough decision and something I need to think about carefully. It is difficult to be able to commit to such an intense sport while also doing such an intense and time-consuming degree. The Medical School have been so supportive with all my 'demands' over the last few years!

How do you feel about the 2022 Games in Birmingham?

It's really exciting, not just for me but also for the city. I've raced and trained so many times at the Alexander Stadium that it's crazy to think in four years' time it will hold the Commonwealth Games and I'll hopefully – fingers crossed – be able to compete in front of all my friends and family.



Zena Wooldridge OBE, the University's Director of Sport spent 12 days as a delegate on the Commonwealth Games Federation's Observation Programme in Gold Coast. The insight this gave around the organisation of a major multi-sport games is invaluable in learning what works well, and what we need to adapt to Birmingham's circumstances. It was particularly important considering Birmingham has only four years (rather than the usual seven years) to plan and deliver the next Games.

What were your overall impressions of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games?

A fabulous Games. Gold Coast did an impressive job of "Sharing the Dream" and delivering a memorable Games. Their 15,000 volunteer workforce were brilliant brand ambassadors. Many who haven't experienced a Commonwealth Games sometimes assume it's just a smaller version of the Olympics – when in fact it has a very different personality and feel to it. The Commonwealth Games movement has recently reinvented itself to ensure its continued relevance in taking 'a global leadership role in uniting the Commonwealth's athletes, citizens and communities through the transformative and connecting power of sport'. Its communities cover one-third of the global population, with over 50% of participants under 24 years of age. It starts to put the influence and leverage of the Commonwealth Games in perspective, and it's thrilling to be able to welcome a Games of this magnitude to Birmingham.

How do Birmingham's facilities compare with Gold Coast?

Other than not having a beach or the right climate for an outdoor competition pool, the visit reassured us that we also have some excellent venues for 2022, albeit a different layout across the city-region. Australia is a swimming nation, and their aquatics venue certainly reflected that, with almost 9,000 spectator seats in three temporary stands entirely sold out. I still smile when I'm asked why we didn't build our University pool big enough to host the Commonwealth Games – that volume of spectator seating would take up most of the Sport & Fitness site and the Bristol Road! Having said that, our 50m training pool is crucially important to the overall facilities for the Games.

Gold Coast built four new facilities for the Games, and upgraded six. Birmingham needs one new competition pool and will upgrade Alexander Stadium as part of our Games' legacy. Both cities' Games Villages are new, and will provide much needed affordable housing post-Games. There are lots of similarities across venues, but also some differences that reflect the quality and adaptability of our Birmingham venues, such as the NEC, Genting and Birmingham arenas, which were pivotal to our bid.

Our University facilities were designed to fill strategic gaps in the city's sporting infrastructure, and will be ideal venues for hockey and squash with minimal adaptation from their day-to-day use. That's the ideal model for future Games, to minimise costs and also deliver some legacy. Alongside these two competition venues, the University will probably be the biggest single site for pre-Games camps and training facilities.

What were the key things you learned from Gold Coast that will inform planning for 2022?

We were privileged to learn from those leading on every functional area of the Games; everything from sports venues to Games Village, city services, waste and sustainability to medical, spectator services and transport, broadcast and media centres, and much more. We did site visits to see behind the scenes during Games-time, which is fascinating and invaluable.

Members of the Gold Coast Organising Committee shared their experience with us – what worked well, the major challenges, and what they would do differently. It gave the opportunity to discuss how Birmingham might apply the insight as we go along, and how we would need to adapt our learning to Birmingham's different circumstances, including a lower budget than Gold Coast, and the configuration of facilities (Gold Coast venues were far more dispersed – over 1,000 miles apart).

Ultimately, our purpose is to provide athletes/players and spectators with an extraordinary Games experience in Birmingham, and we have only one chance to get that right, and four years in which to deliver it. So learning from the Gold Coast organising team was essential to ensure we don't re-invent wheels where we don't need to.

What do you think the Games will do for Birmingham as a whole?

The Games is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Birmingham to showcase the city's transformation as a vibrant global commercial, cultural, leisure and sporting city. It has most of the facilities already in place, with some innovative solutions to showcase certain sports and iconic locations. It brings many partners and leaders across the region together to deliver a once-in-a-lifetime project for the region and its diverse community, and also for the UK. There will be 250 events right here on Birmingham's doorstep, and the fact that we are a host and training venue not only establishes us as a leading sporting university, but it will also hopefully attract more talented international sportspeople to the University as a destination to study. For so many reasons this is Birmingham's time; and the city/region will deliver a unique and memorable Birmingham Commonwealth Games.



Zena Wooldridge, Director of Sport

Research

[IN FOCUS]



THE NASA TESS MISSION OPENS A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE STUDY OF STARS AND PLANETARY SYSTEMS IN OUR GALAXY

In April, Professor Bill Chaplin, Professor of Astrophysics in the School of Physics and Astronomy, travelled to Cape Canaveral to see the launch of the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) – NASA's new exoplanet and stellar astrophysics mission. Bill and fellow astronomers here at Birmingham are playing a leading role in the asteroseismology programme of TESS.

On 18 April, TESS was launched successfully on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket into a beautiful, clear blue Florida sky. Its mission? To provide a unique census of the local solar neighbourhood, our own cosmological back-yard.

TESS is now orbiting the Earth and will survey the brightest stars across the sky to detect thousands of planets orbiting the stars (so-called exoplanets), and to study the stars themselves.

TESS is expected to detect thousands of exoplanets orbiting nearby stars in our Galaxy. But it will not observe exoplanets directly. Rather, it will detect them indirectly by measuring the minuscule dimming of the stars as any planets they may harbour pass across their visible discs, blocking some of their starlight. The tell-tale dip in the amount of light received from the star provides a measure of the size of the planet relative to the size of the star. To calibrate the absolute sizes of discovered planets therefore requires that we know the absolute sizes of their host stars. The same is true if we wish to estimate the masses and ages of exoplanets. This means that if we are to properly know the planets we have discovered, we need to know the stars in as much detail as possible. Asteroseismology provides us with the means to obtain this information, to paint an exquisite portrait of the properties and characteristics of the stars and hence any planets they may host.

Asteroseismology is the study of stars by observation of their gentle oscillations. The oscillations arise because stars resonate like musical instruments. Sound is made naturally in the outermost layers of Sun-like stars. The sound is trapped, with some waves penetrating the centres of the stars. The waves are able to reinforce to make the stars resonate, like sound waves inside a clarinet or an oboe. Because stars are huge balls of hot gas, the trapped waves make the stars oscillate so that they breathe in and out in a rhythmic manner.

Detecting these oscillations allows us to measure properties of the stars – such as size, mass and age – to levels that cannot usually be reached in astrophysical observations. The oscillations also open a unique window on the usually hidden interiors of stars, providing crucial insights on what stars really look like inside and how they change as they age. We will detect oscillations in the TESS data by observing small, periodic changes in brightness as the stars breathe. They get ever so slightly hotter and brighter as they are compressed, and cooler and dimmer as they relax. The asteroseismology programme is being conducted by the TESS Asteroseismic Science Consortium (TASC), an international collaboration comprising more than 300 scientists around the world. Birmingham is leading the study of planet-hosting and Sun-like stars, in particular working closely with the TESS exoplanet leads to provide asteroseismic characterisation of those bright stars around which TESS finds planets, and also stars we already know host planets (discovered by ground-based telescopes).

NASA's Kepler Mission made huge advances in space-based searches for exoplanets and studies of stars. But now TESS is opening fresh and exciting new opportunities. Not only will TESS survey stars over almost the entire sky, compared to the small patches that Kepler scanned, it will also look at the brightest stars. They are visible to the naked eye – unlike the significantly fainter stars that Kepler observed – and they present huge opportunities for characterisation and follow-up using a variety of other telescopes, opening a new discovery space on stars typically 50 to 100 times brighter than the stars observed by Kepler.

WORKING WELL AT UOB – SAFEGUARDING THE WELLBEING OF OUR STAFF

Your wellbeing at work is crucial in helping you to achieve your full potential. To help you stay healthy and happy at work the University offers a wide range of benefits, services and facilities including confidential advice and support, occupational health and disability advice.

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

The Five Ways to Wellbeing concept aims to promote your wellbeing by suggesting simple activities that can be carried out in your everyday life. Our campus is huge and hosts a wealth of opportunities to explore, learn new skills, connect with others and take a break from work. Find out more: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/fivewaystowellbeing



'The University of Birmingham is committed to creating an environment where staff wellbeing is clearly understood and a recognised priority. Employee wellbeing forms an important objective of the Human Resources Strategy, which will be influenced by the wealth of research expertise across our Institution'.

Nigel Waugh, Director of Human Resources

USING RESEARCH TO INFLUENCE OUR WELLBEING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Wellbeing research is being conducted across all areas of the University, and it is important to take advantage of this expertise to inform our staff wellbeing activities.

The University has a Wellbeing Advisory Group, chaired by Professor James Arthur, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing) and Director of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. The group brings together key professional services staff and researchers from across the University to discuss and make decisions on employee wellbeing priorities.

The recent Working Well in Higher Education Conference, held in March 2018 in collaboration with the University of Nottingham, brought together leading researchers from both Institutions to examine:

- Examples of relevant research and practitioner evidence to support engagement in wellbeing in Higher Education Institutions
- Shared learning around wellbeing initiatives, their implementation and success

The Conference, an annual event, is part of cementing employee wellbeing as an important and key objective of Human Resources. The University-wide Health and Safety Policy is currently being redeveloped, and a Wellbeing Strategy will follow with the aim of providing guidance to University leadership, line managers and staff to be positively influencing and safeguarding employee health and wellbeing.



ARE YOU A RESEARCHER SPECIALISING IN WELLBEING?

Please get in touch to share your expertise, influence the Wellbeing Strategy and to be involved in developing guidance on positive employee health and wellbeing practices.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESEARCH EXPERTISE IN A FUN ONE-HOUR CREATIVE WORKSHOP FOR YOUR TEAM!

You will also contribute to a research study that will directly influence guidance on wellbeing in our workplace!

The Survivor Arts Project (College of Social Sciences) is using an arts-based approach to generate ideas about blending personal and professional wellbeing within the context of working well in higher education. The team introduced their study through a workshop at the recent Working Well in Higher Education Conference. This workshop is a perfect addition to an away day or as a general team engagement activity.

SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING WELLBEING EVENTS:

Week of Wellbeing, 8–12 October 2018

Back for a second year, following the success in 2017, Week of Wellbeing brings together events and activities across campus themed to the Five Ways to Wellbeing. If you are interested in running an event, either in your area or University-wide, please get in touch!

Happiness and Wellbeing, during Week of Wellbeing 2018, date to be confirmed

Building on the discussions at the previous Happiness event, run by the Lloyds Banking Group Centre for Responsible Business, this event engages with the concepts of happiness and wellbeing research and initiatives.

Working Well in Higher Education Conference, July 2019

To get in touch or find out more, email hrcomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk or visit www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/wellbeingservices

transforming OUR campus

Campus developments

Spring and summer 2018 represent a time of projects coming close to fruition, and others just beginning. In June, the University Square phase of the Green Heart will open, giving staff and students a feel for what the completed development will look like when it is finished in late 2018. In July, the Collaborative Teaching Laboratory will be handed over to the University ready for students to start using in September. Meanwhile, Chemistry West is being demolished to make way for a School of Engineering building, and the Munrow Sports Centre is being demolished to make way for some temporary additional parking before plans for a new Molecular Sciences Building are finalised.

Teaching and Learning Building

The Teaching and Learning Building received the green light from planners in April 2018, and will become a hub for education. The facility, which will start development during the summer, will provide a state-of-the-art teaching and social study space to support the modern learning experience at Birmingham.

Adjacent to the new library, the building will provide excellent access for students with a diverse range of needs and preferences. It will consist of:

- A 500-seater lecture theatre
- A 250-seater interactive lecture theatre

- Ten seminar rooms for 30 students at a time
- Learning spaces for hundreds of students, which will include areas for individual study, collaborative group work and creative break-out sessions
- A café

Due for completion in early 2020, the Teaching and Learning Building will underline the University's commitment to providing the best buildings and facilities for its staff and students.



Teaching and Learning Building



Teaching and Learning Building

University of Birmingham Edgbaston Park Hotel and Conference Centre

The University of Birmingham Edgbaston Park Hotel and Conference Centre opens in September this year and will provide excellent new accommodation and conference facilities for the University and the wider community.

The 185-bed facility is near to the University’s existing conference facilities off Edgbaston Park Road. This includes the regeneration of Garth House, a Grade II* listed building, and Hornton Grange as part of the work to preserve them for future generations.

Conference facilities will be available in the new centre and both Hornton Grange and Garth House, depending on requirements and size. Flexible accommodation means groups of between 12 and 250 can be accommodated.

The hotel and conference centre will be open to all visitors to the University and city.

Further information

To enquire about a potential booking at the hotel and conference centre, please email:

enquiries@edgbastonparkhotel.com



Hotel and Conference Centre

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS TO THE GREEN HEART FESTIVAL

Towards the end of 2018, the Green Heart will be finished, opening up 12 acres of parkland in the centre of the Edgbaston campus. Offering a variety of spaces for staff, students and the wider community, the Green Heart represents an ambitious transformation.

We want to celebrate this new campus-changing development in style, with 12 months of activities. *The Green Heart Festival* will kick off in June 2019 with an opening weekend, incorporating a prom, performances, interactive demonstrations and much more. This will mark the formal opening of the space and will be open to all.

Over the following 12 months, we will be working with students, staff, community groups and partners to deliver a series of events in the Green Heart that reflect the seasonal change in the space. With a strong link to the University’s research and education, the festival will offer a creative and innovative experience and create a legacy that will live beyond 2019/20, and we need your help.

The Green Heart Festival will be split into four themes, aligned with the seasons:

- Summer – Celebration
- Autumn – Change
- Winter – Illumination
- Spring – Hope



Exhibition banners and Consultation results booklet

Colleges, students, research groups and staff from all areas of the University are invited to bid to deliver an event as part of the festival year. The bid will need to demonstrate a connection to the chosen theme, and articulate how the particular event will be delivered, what its objectives are and who the audience is. Most importantly, we want you to use your imagination and creativity to make this the most diverse and creative year the University has ever seen. All bids will be considered by the Green Heart Task Group and an academic reference group.

What you choose to do is up to you – whether it’s a wildlife walk, a performance, a workshop, a film screening, an exhibition or an interactive session, there are plenty of ways in which you can be part of *The Green Heart Festival*.



VR Headsets

For more information, and to complete the bid form, visit: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/estates/green-heart/index.aspx>

Don’t forget to enjoy your lunch break in the newly completed University Square.

SPORT & FITNESS – A YEAR ON

The University of Birmingham's Sport & Fitness Club celebrated its one year anniversary on 22 May 2018 – and 12 months on, the Club is thriving. With over £60 million invested in indoor and outdoor sports facilities in and around campus, we look back to see the effect it has had so far.

In addition to the Sport & Fitness Club, which has Birmingham's first 50m pool, a 200-station gym and five studios; the hockey pitches (the blue ones!), the 3G pitch (the green one!), the athletics track (near the Vale) and the new gymnastics facility at the Gillett Centre (near Selly Oak campus) have also been in use, enabling an increased participation in activities and a better experience for those doing sport and fitness activities on campus. Alongside the University-wide wellness campaign 'Five Ways to Wellbeing', it's never been easier to ensure you're getting that dose of exercise endorphins on a regular basis, and a look back at the stats from this year shows that members have been well and truly embracing it!

At the beginner level, the 'Try A Sport' programme has seen participation numbers increase by 40% to 428 in Term 1 of this academic year, and the programme has been a key mechanism for engaging people who lack the confidence or desire to join in with competitive sport.

More court and studio space has enabled additional drop-in sport sessions and group exercise classes. Sessions like netball and basketball, led by student volunteers, now host an average of 104 participants each week – an 82% increase from last year! The new Sport & Fitness Club provides, on average, more than 45 additional classes per week than in the old Munrow Sports Centre. The huge class timetable has enabled more than 100,000 bookings since May 2017! Campaigns for National Fitness Day, Destressival and class referrals for mental wellbeing have worked hard to engage new audiences to use group exercise as a tool for increasing physical and mental wellbeing.

The increase in indoor and outdoor space has also enabled Campus League to flourish. Campus League provides a competitive, inclusive and recreational sport programme for staff and students to get together and play against other College teams in an informal and enjoyable environment. The initiative has been instrumental in engaging a wide spectrum of people across the University in netball, basketball, football, hockey and touch rugby, seeing over 1,700 participants competing this year compared to 1,100 in 2016.

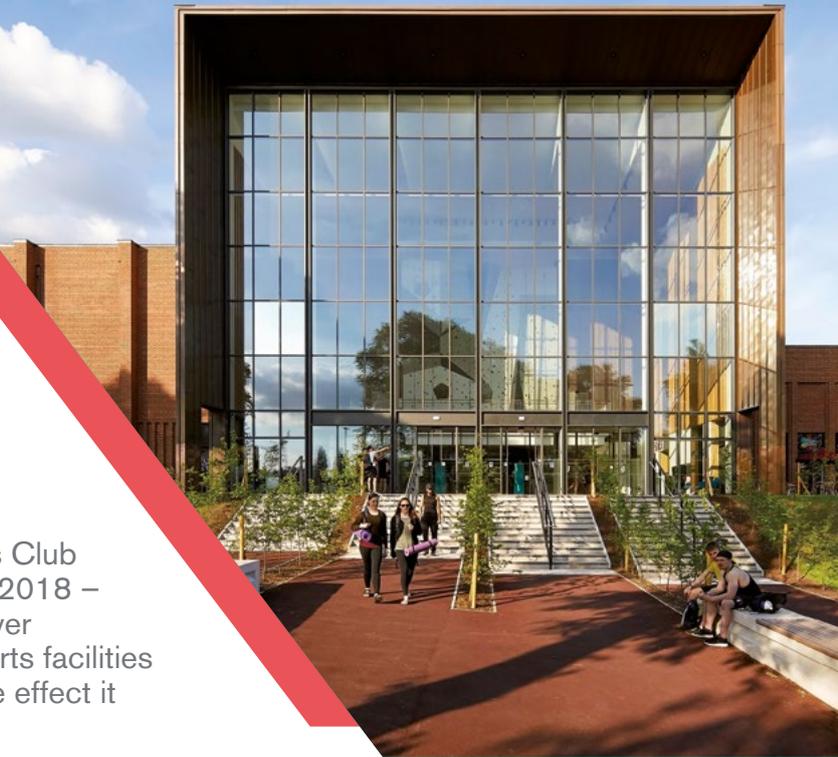
The Club has also been well received by juniors: as well as a hugely popular junior swim membership and over 1,000 children taking part in swimming lessons each week during term time, the inaugural Junior Sports Camp was held in Easter 2018 with 159 out of 160 places filled.

The new facilities have also enabled new partnerships to develop, such as Wasps Netball. The partnership with the Superleague team has initiated events such as age-group showcase games to be hosted in the new arena, giving a platform for emerging athletes to experience playing in an environment with spectators, which emulates professional sport. The University's hockey players have benefitted from the new pitches for their home matches, with the Women's National Premier League hockey team placing 5th in the league after a highly successful season; the second team bringing home a BUCS Silver medal and a fantastic eight players being selected to play for their countries in this year's Commonwealth Games.

Following the announcement at the end of 2017 that Birmingham will be the host city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and that the University will host hockey and squash, the new facilities will be adapted to accommodate the event. Birmingham will expect 71 nations with over 5,000 athletes to arrive in the city, and so the Bournbrook hockey pitches will be transformed into a hockey stadium with 5,000 spectator seats, and the Munrow Arena in Sport & Fitness will become a showcase squash court with an all-glass court for doubles and singles, with around 1,000 spectator seats.

As the first-ever University host in a Commonwealth Games, it's fantastic to see so much national- and international-level sport already being played on campus. The six glass-back squash courts are used throughout term time for the Premier Squash League franchise, and in January, Sport & Fitness hosted its first major international sport event: the British Junior Open squash tournament. This event, the most prestigious junior squash competition in the world, attracted over 600 competitors from 39 nations – resulting in 2,300 matches across six days! Following 22 consecutive years of the event being hosted in Sheffield, Birmingham won a bid to host the annual tournament until 2020, and this year's successful inaugural tournament received huge praise from athletes, coaches, spectators and referees.

If you haven't already, there's plenty of opportunities to get involved: discover more at www.sportandfitness.bham.ac.uk/



Royal Collection drawings perfect the Barber's student show

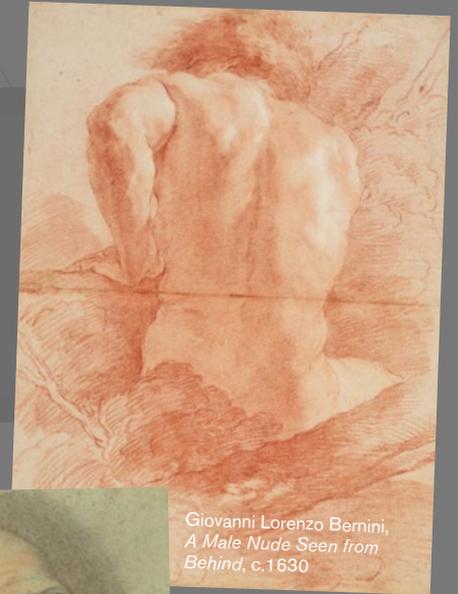
Exquisite drawings from the Royal Collection, lent by Her Majesty The Queen, will be on display in the Barber Institute's major exhibition this summer – the result of a prestigious new collaboration between Royal Collection Trust and the University's Department of History of Art, Curating and Visual Studies.

Drawn to Perfection: Master Works on Paper from the Royal Collection has been curated by MA students working with museum professionals at the Barber and Royal Collection Trust. It is the first time Royal Collection Trust has undertaken a curatorial project with students, with two further exhibition collaborations planned for 2019 and 2020.

Opening at the gallery on campus on 15 June, the show features works by some of the most important artists working in Italy during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, including Bernini, the Carraccis, Claude and Poussin.

The exhibition explores the role of drawings in producing art of all forms – whether as compositional models for paintings, frescoes, tapestries, sculpture or architecture, and as working sketches that allow an artist to study expressions, poses and anatomy.

It will be the culmination of a year-long process that has seen the students visiting the Print Room at Windsor Castle to select and research the drawings for the show. They have written the explanatory text panels and picture labels and published an exhibition guide. And they have helped to plan appealing related events, draft marketing copy and devise an engaging and fun social media campaign. The five working on the project will also deliver public gallery talks and introduce the exhibition and their experiences to members of the Barber Association at an evening reception.



Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, *A Male Nude Seen from Behind*, c.1630



Federico Barocci, *The Head of an Old Man*, c.1575

A second cohort of MA students worked with contemporary gallery and artists' collective Centrala to curate an exhibition of new work in Birmingham's East Side district from 1 to 10 June.

The Barber's Director, Nicola Kalinsky, said: 'The students have created a wonderful exhibition using beautiful examples to offer an enlightening examination of the varied purpose and uses of drawings. We are delighted to be staging the show here at the Barber.'

Student Katerina Nakatsiadi added: 'Visiting the Print Room at Windsor Castle and selecting these beautiful and fascinating drawings – and then working with the Royal Collection Trust team to produce an exhibition – has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and it has been fantastic to see it take shape at the Barber. For those of us taking our first steps as curators, it has been a momentous opportunity.'



Polidoro da Caravaggio, *The Head of St Thomas (?)*, c. 1527

All images: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018

Drawn to Perfection: Master Works on Paper from the Royal Collection runs from 15 June to 23 September at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Chancellor's *column*

In May, I was privileged to attend the inaugural dinner for our Chamberlain Circle, which brings together our most generous donors. The University of Birmingham started with the benefaction of Joseph Chamberlain, along with the Calthorpe family, and it is these donations which continue to guarantee and reinforce our future success. This event recognised and celebrated the huge impact of the generous benefactions from these donors to our University over the past years: in total they have given over £30 million to the institution. Their support has enabled us to continue to excel, be it through funding infrastructure and research or enabling students who otherwise would not be able to afford it the opportunity to study at a world-class Russell Group university.

At the event, we were also able to announce that we had reached the 1,000 milestone in our 'Change 10,000 Lives' appeal, a unique and transformational initiative. The Vice-Chancellor also announced that the University's latest fundraising campaign, to be launched next year, will be raising the bar, with a target to make this one of the largest fundraising campaigns of any British university.

In May, I also attended and spoke at the Biannual Defence Dining Club dinner. The guest speaker was the First Sea Lord, the Chief of the Naval Staff of the Royal Navy. The event has the highest quality of speakers on every occasion, bringing together the defence community of the West Midlands as well as our impressive University of Birmingham cadets.

The Birmingham cadets were not only there in force but asked some excellent questions. It was another event that made me very proud of our University.

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

CAMPUS CURIOSITIES



What is it?

Laced Threads, 2004, by Dinah Prentice (b. 1935),
Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art, Research
and Cultural Collections

Where is it?

Rotunda Gallery – First Floor, Aston Webb Building, University of Birmingham (open during University opening hours)

Throughout her life, Dinah Prentice has explored the concept of bringing together fragments in her artistic practice. Whether textiles, canvas or text, she sutures together materials that have otherwise been fractured or divided. Invited to create a response to the Rotunda in the Aston Webb Building during an exhibition in 2004, the artist chose to weave a junction between the top two floors.

Now a permanent site-specific installation, *Laced Threads*, was created by running lengths of nylon string from the Whispering Gallery above the Rotunda, to the wrought iron balustrade on the first floor – quite literally stitching the two spaces together. The threads create interlocking lace patterns with the iron-work of the balustrade and, as the eye travels upward, also echo the diamond patterns in the trompe l'oeil ceiling above. The delicacy of each individual thread, almost invisible in certain lights, is at the same time a visual metaphor of strength that lassos the grand architectural shapes of the building. For Prentice, meaning in the artwork is constructed into, and through, its material components. Her aspirations for what textiles can embody, as opposed to traditional methods of fine art production, reflect her deep critical engagement with wider histories of art, politics and feminism.

Find out more

Research and Cultural Collections are delighted to announce forthcoming exhibition, Dinah Prentice, *Piecing*, 8 June–24 August, in the Rotunda Gallery (First Floor, Aston Webb Building). The exhibition launch is **8 June 6.00–8.00pm**, all welcome.



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

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

in the news...

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

Our expertise in engineering and physical sciences have come to the fore in the regional press this week. **Professor Bob Stone's** VR prize-giving event in Devon with the Brownies was featured in the *Plymouth Herald*, amongst other titles.

Research led by **Professor Chris Baker** monitoring air quality at Birmingham New Street railway station, featured in *The Sunday Times* and *Daily Express*.

Our psychology expertise has been highlighted this week, with **Angela Meadows** commenting in *The Conversation* and *The Metro* about how discrimination against overweight people is becoming an epidemic, while Professor Suzanne Higgs talked to **BBC online** about why we eat more when we are in company.

BBC Radio West Midlands discussed how **Dr Melrose Stewart** will be returning to our TV screens in a new series of Channel 4's *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds*, which is a social experiment looking at how the very young and the old can come together to transform the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of older people for the better.

Language expert **Katrien Segaert's** research into the link between fitness and speech was covered by *The New York Times*. **Professor Neil Thomas'** research into the health effects of third-hand cigarette smoke was picked up by *Times of India*.

Science media published articles highlighting how a research paper showing the results of the BUMPES trial led by **Professor Peter Brocklehurst** has been crowned 'UK Research Paper of the Year' in The BMJ Awards 2018.

The University signed an agreement with Haryana State Government to work together in boosting agricultural production and productivity in India through the use of 'clean cold' technology – covered by *Business Standard India*, *Times of India* and *United News of India* among others. **Professor Toby Peters** was interviewed by Climate Change Middle East on his research into 'clean cold' and sustainable cooling.

Join the UoB online community

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



feeling social...

With the creation of a new Campaigns and Reputation team within External Relations, the University's central social media accounts are now increasingly being used to showcase the incredible research being carried out here at Birmingham, and to raise the profile of our academics in innovative ways.

During April, we worked alongside EPS to promote Professor Bill Chaplin's trip to NASA to work on the TESS launch; creating a dynamic and personal video featuring Bill talking about himself and his research to share across our social channels. His journey was also shared on the University's Instagram Stories, capturing his journey to Florida and commentary on the mission.

In May, to highlight the publication of Professor Heather Widdows' new book *Perfect Me*, the team created a series of short videos to share on our Twitter feed, as well as a longer one to share on Facebook. These were also supported by a digital advertising campaign on Facebook and Instagram, to capitalise on the exposure Heather's book was receiving from the likes of the *New York Times* and the *Huffington Post*.

These posts all led back to a campaign page built specifically for the audience and to feature Heather's research. Alongside this, we supported Heather with a new image for her Twitter account's header along with suggestions on how to maximise reach using her personal Twitter account.

Joe Berry... in my own words



Joe Berry, a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, is the University's Higher Education Futures institute (HEFi) Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Partnership Manager for the College of Life and Environmental Sciences (LES), and the Professional Services lead on the Educational Technology stream of the Collaborative Teaching Laboratory (CTL).

📌 Aged 18 I made the journey down the M42 from Nottingham to arrive at the University of Birmingham to study Psychology. I enjoyed my time as an undergraduate here, but moved on to do a Masters degree in software development and then into industry. I then spent ten years in the web application industry, developing systems for companies such as Whirlpool, Electronic Arts and BP.

Fourteen years ago I decided to change career to focus on educational technology in higher education. This decision led me back to Birmingham where I've since held a number of roles across the University. I'm currently based in LES, which feels like my natural home given my academic background and interests.

When the new role of Educational Technology (Ed Tech) lead for the CTL arose I thought it would be a perfect way for me to be part of a major project from the outset, influencing the use of Ed Tech on a broad scale in a truly cross-institutional team. The CTL comprises academics from across the STEM disciplines, student interns, HEFi, the AS Projects Team and the EPS Ed Tech team.

So, how will teaching be different in the CTL? Well, the main difference is that we are making a big investment in digital pre-labs, producing hundreds of digital resources that will allow students to familiarise themselves with the practical work that awaits them before they get into the laboratory. This means that they arrive better prepared and with a greater understanding and ability to focus on the wider theoretical context of the experiments, rather than just on the processes.

The CTL will also prepare our students better for working life by reflecting the multifaceted nature of real lab jobs. Through Ed Tech, students can collate their individual lab results into bigger, class-wide data sets, allowing larger scale data analysis to be built into lab assessments and thereby offering more realistic scenarios and robust results. On the collaborative module, STEM students will work together to address complex problems by drawing on their individual and team strengths. This is not only vital workplace preparation, but it also lays the pathway to tackling major global problems by instilling a willingness to look across disciplines and beyond one's own strengths and weaknesses.

Whilst the primary focus for Ed Tech is pedagogic impact, the CTL will host some pretty nifty, fun and interactive technologies. The pick for me is the range of 3D virtual tours that offer interactive learning, and give students (and staff) the ability to explore the lab in virtual reality and click on various pieces of equipment to view videos and 'how to' tutorials.

Other Russell Group universities like Sheffield and Liverpool have central teaching facilities similar to the CTL, but our ambition is to be the best in sector. Where we are unique is that we'll deliver both a brand new purpose-built lab building and a new, collaborative, digital-rich pedagogy simultaneously. Ultimately, this is a long-term project, and we will be continuing to enhance the Ed Tech side over the next three to five years.

As we move forward with new digital innovations I'm particularly excited by the prospect of adaptive learning technologies. They have been on the cusp of a breakthrough for a few years but are now starting to emerge. The idea is that content and activities are automatically suggested according to the learner's level of knowledge, ability or learning preference. For large cohorts of students, where it is sometimes very difficult for academics to personally give frequent, individual feedback, this could be a real benefit.

Most of my working life is in the virtual realm so I do like to balance that by getting outdoors whenever possible. I cycle to work every day and generally enjoy going into the wilds, camping and walking. Football also plays a big part in my life. I used to live around the corner from Brian Clough's son's newsagents, and met Cloughie himself a few times. He used to hang around there for hours greeting shoppers with an 'afternoon, young man'. Great days. Arguably my biggest achievement at the University is my length of service to the Institution's most venerable six-a-side football team, Aston Webba. This staff team, which has many notable alumni who I won't embarrass here, has been together for almost a decade now. Our trophy cabinet may be as barren as that of the recent history of my beloved Nottingham Forest's, but we have taken on all comers admirably, both staff and students. Unfortunately the student teams do not seem to be ageing at the same rate we are... 📌