

Graham Gee... in my own words



Graham Gee, a Lecturer in the Birmingham Law School, tells Buzz more about his route into academia, and experiences as a solicitor.

It was in a taxi in London very early on a cold and bleak morning in October 2001 when I decided to leave practice. I remember the sonorous tones of John Humphries on the radio announcing the start of another day as the taxi made its way along the deserted streets, and I was on my way home from work, to sleep for an hour or two, and shower before returning to my desk as a trainee solicitor.

Life in a large commercial law firm was demanding, but it had its rewards. The work was exciting and high profile. Above all, the firm provided a rigorous professional training, exposing me to the pressures and challenges of large, market-sensitive and time-sensitive transactions. Yet, I found myself unfulfilled and searching out new and more academic pursuits. Eleven years later, I'm a lecturer at the Law School.

Perhaps rather surprisingly, my teaching and research interests are far removed from my days as a commercial lawyer. Today, I'm a 'public lawyer'. Simply put: public law is concerned with relations between the citizen and the state. As I see it, public law is ultimately about the relationship between law and politics and the relative power of politicians and judges.

Public law is taught to first year undergraduates at the Law School. One of the great joys of teaching each new intake of first year students is watching them question their preconceptions about law and politics.

Grappling with the idea that, on occasion, non-legal rules might be more important than legal rules and that sometimes the answer to constitutional problems might be less law and more politics, not more law and less politics.

The Law School has an active public law research community with a discussion group that meets several times a year. We have been very fortunate this year to have great presentations on the place of religious tribunals in domestic law, the case for a British Bill of Rights and, perhaps a little more esoterically, the public law implications of tax law! It would be great if other researchers in the university with shared interests in law, politics and human rights wanted to attend the group, and this is something that I hope to work on next year.

At this time of year most of our thoughts turn to exams. This is my fourth year at the Law School, yet I still get very nervous the night before the public law exam. As the module leader, I'm usually the chief invigilator, and it is always rather strange watching the students open the paper and seeing the range of reactions from relief to anxiety and pleasure to pain. If I'm just as nervous at the start of the exam as the students, our reactions differ at its conclusion. While the students get relief and – hopefully – peace of mind, my colleagues and I get stuck with the marking!

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Relevant Royalty?

April/May 2012

7



Guild news

8



Royal debate

15



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Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood

YOUR BUZZ

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Vice-Chancellor's View

Our contribution, our University

Arriving at the University this morning, I stopped to say farewell to Aston Webb Receptionist, Wendy Allen, who retired after 24 years at Birmingham. It's of course a truism on such occasions to say someone will be greatly missed, but it's so often true.

In Wendy's case, she's been the welcoming face of the University to those coming to the Great Hall and Aston Webb for many years, and in other areas of the University, for a quarter of a century. She embodied all that's best in so many who work for our University. Always smiling, always helpful, hugely knowledgeable about what people might want, and, above all, exuding sheer delight at being part of our University community.

Birmingham is full of people like Wendy, and they are often people's first and abiding impression of visiting the University. Security guards on the gate to enable puzzled visitors to find their way around our huge and complex campus. Receptionists across all our main buildings to greet and steer people in the right direction. Done well and warmly, this makes all the difference.

Then there are Hospitality and Accommodation Services (HAS) staff who are quietly supportive of our students, and often spot a student who needs a bit of help or advice. For those away from home for the first time, or far from home in other parts of the world, that kind of thoughtful attention can speak volumes.

In freezing weather, when I walk or drive to the office, I always find the campus gritted, and, on those snowy mornings, snow cleared so the University can go about its business. Silently I thank those who have worked in freezing conditions

to clear the campus, and, if I can find them, I thank them directly.

Like any large community, we depend on thousands to make our University work. We enjoy the fruits of their work. The grounds are stunning. A complex estate is kept running and refurbished. Staff and students' security and well-being are promoted with great professionalism and commitment. When I talk with colleagues from across the University, I am heartened by their enthusiasm for what they do and they rightly take pride in their own contribution to our success.

When I ran the Higher Education Funding Council, I visited countless universities. Indeed there are only about three English universities I haven't set foot in. I always had a test: 'How was I welcomed?' You could tell a great deal about a university from the way it welcomes its visitors. We would pass my test, but it's a test which relies on everyone's commitment and professionalism.

I am trying to find ways of thanking all staff for their contribution. It's not easy in a university as large and diverse as ours, but it's important. We do it in the HAS OSCARS; we do it with the BUAFATAs; and we'll try to do it in new ways too. But nothing beats saying thank you, and recognising that to be a first class university everyone's contribution should be first class.

So, if we all recognise that contribution that all staff make in our different ways, we won't have unsung heroes, and colleagues will know they are valued for doing a good job. Then at the end of the week, at the end of the year, and (like Wendy) at the end of our career, we can take satisfaction that we've been privileged to contribute to a university that we can call 'ours'.

Front cover image: Graham Gee,
Lecturer Birmingham Law School.

Vice-Chancellor,
Professor David Eastwood

'Ask the VC'

Vice-Chancellor's Open Forum

Tuesday 22 May, 12.30–1.30pm
Haworth lecture theatre, Haworth building

Have you ever thought 'I wish I could ask our VC that?' Do you wish staff events discussed topics of interest to you? Would you like to hear what the VC has to say about your area of work? Do you wish you could give him your opinion?

For this term's VC Open Forum the Vice-Chancellor would like to open the floor to you. After a brief introduction he will answer your questions and hear your feedback. This is a valuable opportunity to discuss those topics that you want to talk about.

How do I ask a question or submit a topic?

You can send us your question or topic by email and we will ask the question on your behalf on the day. You can choose to remain anonymous: just let us know when you contact us. You can also put your hand up during the event to ask a question or contribute to the discussion.

Why do you ask us to submit in advance?

Some members of staff may feel uncomfortable asking a question during the event so we always offer the opportunity to pre-submit questions or topics. It is not about 'scripting' the event.

Who is this event for?

This event is for all staff. You may be a member of academic staff or professional services. You may be an administrator or work in a technical or manual role. You may be a researcher; you may be involved in teaching, or both! All members of staff are welcome and if you are driving the topics for discussion it will be relevant to you.

What could I ask?

What you would like to discuss! Here are some ideas:

- Your area of work and activity
- The University's strategy or policies
- New projects or initiatives
- Leadership and management
- National HE policy
- Birmingham's external profile
- Anything you would like to talk about

We look forward to seeing you there.



UNIVERSITY INTRANET NEEDS YOU!

As featured in the December edition of Buzz, the University is developing a new intranet which has been designed to improve the quality of internally facing content and opportunities for feedback and communication across campus.

As our 'sneak peek' picture shows the new intranet will look and feel very similar to the external website www.birmingham.ac.uk. The easy to navigate menu and search function will make it easier for you to find the information that you need, and the upload process will also be much simpler for content editors.

The new intranet will start to go live in May with specific team and department details, plus central campus community and Buzz pages packed with news, events and opportunities for staff across the University. These pages will include details on campus clubs, societies and networks that staff can join, and Buzz needs you to help us ensure that we are promoting your activities!

If you are a member of a University society, club, social or work network, and would like to raise the profile of your events to staff across campus please let us know. Email details to internalcomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk and we will be happy to add your information to the new intranet. There will also be a social media section on the site providing quick links to Facebook, Twitter accounts and more. Please let us know if you would like your individual, team, School or College account to be added to this list.

For further details on the intranet project visit www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/intranet.shtml. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on intranet content please email intranet@contacts.bham.ac.uk.



CARBON TRUST STANDARD SUCCESS



Thank you to all who have helped to reduce emissions and energy usage across campus. The University's measures to manage and improve carbon efficiency have been recognised by the Carbon Trust who have re-accredited the University under the Carbon Trust Standard.

The University received the award on merit thanks to recent individual, team and campus wide initiatives including retrofit projects, upgrading of buildings, the Green Impact Scheme and Combined Heat Power Station (steam bridge).

The Carbon Trust Standard is the world's first carbon award for organisations measuring, managing and reducing their carbon emissions year-on-year. A list of organisations that are certified with the Carbon Trust Standard is available at www.carbontruststandard.com/pages/current-standard-bearers

For further details on University Environmental Policy and how you can help to meet and even exceed our 2020 target visit www.environment.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml.

Celebrating the success of Cultural Internship Programme

The cultural engagement team and cultural partners in the West Midlands are celebrating the success of the first year of their Cultural Internship Scheme. Five Birmingham graduates have spent the last six months undertaking high quality work experience at leading cultural organisations across the West Midlands. The programme has provided opportunities for the interns to manage their own exciting projects, and gain insight to working practices in internationally-renowned organisations. These experiences were strengthened by a residential training programme developed by Alison Darby, University Cultural Partnerships Manager. Focusing on communication and business skills, employability guidance and insights into working in the cultural sector, the sessions called upon expert speakers and included cultural visits.

Interns developed their skills with five of the region's leading cultural organisations;

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham Opera Company, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Library of Birmingham and Sampad South Asian Arts. The initiative also has the backing of Alan Davey, CEO of Arts Council England, with whom the interns enjoyed a private audience at the University in January.

Recruitment of recent graduates for the 2012/13 internships begins in April, with placements commencing in October 2012. Further information can be found at www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture.

'My internship at Sampad has been very varied and full of new learning opportunities...and has significantly improved my project management and budgeting skills'

Katy Wade, Cultural Intern at Sampad South Asian Arts

Can you capture what the University of Birmingham means to you in 2012?

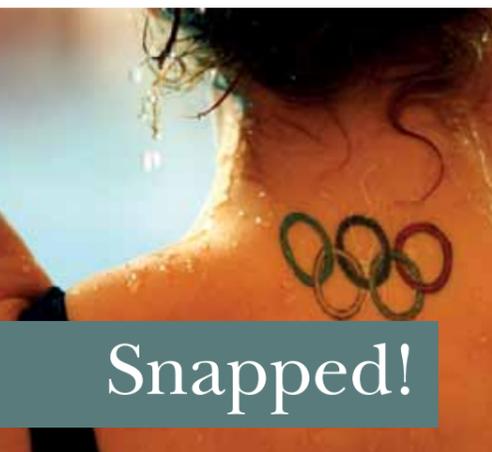
Give your perspective on the characters and events that sum up life at the University through images that illustrate why our vibrant campus is such a unique place. Snapped! is a photographic competition marking the Cultural Olympiad, and is open to all students and staff at the University.

- 1st prize: £300 of Selfridges vouchers
- 2nd prize: £150 of Selfridges vouchers

- 3rd prize: £50 of Selfridges vouchers
- Entries are invited which document university life for staff and students in 2012, and address one or more of the Cultural Olympiad themes; which include Sustainability, Education, and Neighbourhood, and Culture.

Further details and Snapped entry form are available at www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture/snapped.aspx. Closing date for entries is 12 noon, Friday 11 May 2012.

Will your image take first prize?



Snapped!

Bringing our prospectus to life



This year, we've digitally enhanced our 2013 undergraduate prospectus using augmented reality technology. The Look Deeper app, currently available for the iPhone and iPad with an Android version on the way, brings our campus, our staff and our students to life – giving prospective students a closer look at life at the University.

We're now looking at other exciting ways we can use augmented reality to connect with students and staff. If you would like to know more, please contact Katie Connolly on k.connolly@bham.ac.uk or Jackie Sherlock on j.sherlock@bham.ac.uk.

THERE IS MORE. LOOK DEEPER.



TRY IT YOURSELF

if you've got an iPhone or iPad:

- Download our free Look Deeper app
- Scan over the image wherever you see the icon
- Hear our students and staff talk about life at the University of Birmingham – try it on the prospectus cover and watch our campus come to life

University hosts Dyslexia Training Day

The University recently hosted a regional training day for the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education, with professionals attending from a number of universities across the Midlands. The event, organised by Student Support Services, showcased a web-based, interactive resource aimed at preparing new students with specific learning difficulties, but applicable to all students. The resource was created following recommendations by first year Birmingham undergraduates who were interviewed as part of Alumni-funded research into the transition process. The resource includes vodcasts of students talking about their experiences; hands-on activities such as a practice lecture and note-taking exercise and a range of effective learning tools. The resource has been well received by teachers and parents of sixth form students keen to take a proactive approach to preparing students for the transition to university. The underpinning research was presented at the British Dyslexia Association's International Conference and has since been accepted for publication.

For information on the resource visit www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/diversity/learningsupport/transition/index.shtml

AUA providing professional development for University administrators

Established in 1961, the Association of University Administrators (AUA) is the professional association for higher education administration and management staff. With more than 4,000 members, AUA promote excellence in higher education management and provide a range of development opportunities for University administrators including:

- CPD framework
- Opportunities for professional study
- Networking at regional and national events

For further details on AUA and how you can join, contact Georgina Fletcher, University of Birmingham AUA Branch Coordinator, at e.g.fletcher.20@bham.ac.uk or visit www.aua.ac.uk



Graduating students...

get award winning careers support

What will I do after university? An important decision that some students still leave until after their exams. Our colleagues in the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) are developing a number of enhanced services for graduating students, and they are winning awards too. Enhanced services include:

A new website for new graduates

www.birmingham.ac.uk/graduatecareers

will launch at the start of the summer term and include information on:

- Short term options after graduation
- Postgraduate study
- How to choose a career
- The hidden job market
- How to network using social media
- Using recruitment agencies
- Freelance working/working for yourself
- Search for jobs online using our database

Keeping in touch

CEC are working with colleagues in the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) to develop a monthly graduate e-newsletter and to contribute to the DARO LinkedIn group and Facebook page. Students can sign up for the graduate e-newsletter, by contacting Amy Swanson A.E.Swanson@bham.ac.uk with their preferred email address.

Virtual Recruitment Fair

CEC will be running a Virtual Recruitment Fair from 21 May–8 June to advertise employment opportunities to final year students and graduates of the University. They will offer online chat sessions between employers, students and careers advisers, as well as a service to upload CVs which potential employers can view.

Careers Road Show

CEC's staff and student team will also be out and about on campus from 21 May to 8 June. There will be a programme of activity within each College with advice sessions, drop-ins and workshops in College venues and hubs. Look out for the Gazebo outside the Main Library on Wednesday 23 May, 30 May and 6 June.

'We are thrilled to become the first university to win the Best Public Sector Placement at the NCWE awards. As a careers service, we are acutely aware of the value of work experience and have endeavoured to offer our student interns a remarkable range of opportunities to gain skills. We intend to expand this programme, so more students will have chance to benefit.'
Jessica Holloway-Swift,
Student Engagement Officer

Careers and Employability Centre wins national award for internships

CEC has won the national award for Best Public Sector Work Placement for its internship scheme from the National Council for Work Experience (NCWE).

The University has been recruiting paid interns for more than five years and it now takes around 25 national and international students per year. The students benefit from having a dedicated member of staff, the Student Engagement Officer, who co-ordinates and supervises the team's work as well as providing individual mentoring and support.

This is the second major national award that the CEC has won in the past three months and the Centre was also highly commended in the AGR Graduate Development awards.

What you can do

You can support graduating students in your School by letting them know about the careers support available to them. For more information contact the Careers Consultant for your College www.as.bham.ac.uk/careers



Pictures courtesy of Jim Reali
www.shooting-gallery.co.uk

GUILD OFFICER TEAM ELECTIONS 2012



Buzz would like to welcome the 2012 Guild of Students Officer Team. The Team is elected every year to lead the Guild of Students; each officer has a different remit and it is their role to take the Guild forward to improve the student experience.

National Student Money Week

The Student Funding Office held a number of events during National Student Money Week (12–16 March) to highlight that saving money can be relatively simple and does not always mean 'going without'. Events included a series of live web chats for prospective undergraduates with our funding advisors to explain the changes in student finance. The ever popular 'Taste Test' returned with participants tasting economy and branded jelly babies and snack crackers to demonstrate how small changes in their shopping habits can mean big savings! Pedro the Chef cooked up a feast of both meat and vegetarian chilli to show that cooking on a budget can still mean tasty food, with over 100 students stopping by to try the chilli and collect their recipe card. There was also the opportunity for students to submit their own money saving idea into our 'Wonga Wok' for the chance to win the wok itself and a £25 gift voucher. There were some great suggestions from 'make lots of food and freeze some' to 'when the mascara tube seems empty put it in hot water for 10 minutes and what's left will melt'.

Get Involved Fair

Students found out about a wide range of opportunities and services at the Get Involved Fair, held on 31 January in the Great Hall. This annual event is aimed at students who aren't already engaged with activities, providing an opportunity for them to join societies and sign up for volunteering activities. The Guild event saw an increase in footfall from last year at which around 80 Guild groups and a dozen University services were present. Many of the students that attended signed up for more information. From the Student Funding Office's Big Taste Test and an opportunity to try Quill Writing with Special Collections, to performances by the Guild's Breaksoc and Battle Re-enactment societies, there was something for everyone! Work is underway to evaluate the Fair and a bigger and better event is being planned for 2013.

GET INVOLVED!



Voting, and campaigning for the 2012 elections took place in March. Over 6,150 votes were received for the 39 candidates, the second highest number of candidates ever seen in a Guild Officer Election.

Sabbatical Officers:

- 1 President – David Franklin
- 2 Vice President (Activities and Development) – Ollie Cosentino
- 3 Vice President (Democracy and Resources) – Leander Jones
- 4 Vice President (Education) – Simon Furse
- 5 Vice President (Housing and Community) – James Robertson
- 6 Vice President (Sport) – James Hughes
- 7 Vice President (Welfare) – Katherine East

Non-Sabbatical Officers:

- Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism Officer – Hannah Skolnick
- Community Action Officer – Sean Farnelo
- Disabled Students' Officer – Amy Connelly
- Ethical and Environmental Officer – Alice Swift
- Ethnic Minority Students' Officer – Sacha Hassan
- Home Students' Officer – Joe Sewell
- International Students' Officer – Saara Pokki
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Students' Officer – Rachel Foreman
- Satellite Sites Officer – Adam Smith
- Women's Officer – Kristina Ilieva

For more information please email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk



LONG
LIVE
OUR
NOBLE
ROYALS?

2012 marks the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne and it would be really difficult to imagine the United Kingdom without a Royal Family, an institution that has been firmly rooted in our society for more than 1,000 years. However, as the power of the sovereign continues to decline, the custom of bloodline accession faces criticism of its relevance in a contemporary democratic society.

'The Royal Family provides a framework which holds the country together,' explains Gëzim Alpion, a lecturer in Sociology from the Department of Political Science and International Studies. 'They have been a known constant anchored to society for around 1,000 years and are paramount to giving us a sense of identity.'

The Royals are the subject of continued fascination which is intrinsic to their enduring popularity, both amongst British citizens swept up with the fairytale notion of Royalty, and even more so amongst tourists who view the Royals as a pillar of Britishness. 'We have witnessed the 'celebrification' of the House of Windsor,'

acts only on the advice of her ministers is not merely vital for preserving parliamentary democracy, it also protects the Queen herself from political criticism.'

'The Queen's constitutional power may have diminished in comparison to her predecessors,' suggests Graham, 'but this doesn't mean she is powerless. Every living Prime Minister attests to how useful and important their one-to-one meetings with the Queen have been. It is impossible to know what happens in these meetings, but I suspect that the Queen has the power of 'the raised eyebrow' and that has probably encouraged many a Prime Minister to think again.'

The adaptability of the Royals has ensured their longevity as fame is fickle, making it imperative that the family continually adapt to the changing times. This was evidenced last year with a change in legislation governing royal succession, paving the way for the firstborn of Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge to assume the throne whether the baby is a boy or a girl.

'The Royal Family has always been wise enough to understand that they have to continually change to adapt

As we prepare to wave our Union Jack's once again to celebrate the Royal Family (and an extra day off), Amy Cory explores the shifting power of the monarchy with Gëzim Alpion and Graham Gee.



reasons Gëzim, whose research interests include fame capital and the sociology of success. 'We feel like we know them inside out and therefore are able to get a sense of them as ordinary and extraordinary people. We view them as 'different', as modern-day heroes and aspirational figures abiding by a sense of duty,' he adds.

This sense of duty positions the Royals as pillars of stability and security in an ever-changing society which perhaps justifies their worth according to Graham Gee, a Lecturer in the Law School. 'Queen Elizabeth II has transcended party politics,' he explains. 'She may today be largely a figurehead, not much more than a 'symbol', but all societies need symbols. If we talk about removing monarchs as the apex of our political and legal systems, who would replace them? Removal would likely give more power to politicians and it is arguable that they already have too much of that.'

'Yes, the powers of the constitutional monarch have dwindled over time,' adds Graham whose research focuses on the constitution. 'The Queen still 'reigns' as Head of State but she doesn't 'rule', performing her public duties only on ministerial advice. That the Queen

to societal changes,' explains Gëzim. 'However, this is only ever a moderate amount of change as we wouldn't want them cheapening their status and turning into the Osbournes. Queen Elizabeth II does a splendid job. She epitomises her sense of duty perfectly and is married to her role as sovereign,' he adds.

With the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations fast approaching, it leaves us to wonder if there will ever be a day without the monarchy in Britain? 'This is a discussion that we will still have in 100 years,' suggests Graham. 'There is currently no serious agitation for constitutional reform to extend to the monarchy,' he confirms.

Gëzim points to the structure of the country as the main force that could lead to the disbandment of the institution. 'It really depends on what happens with the structure of the Kingdom. If Scotland breaks free for example, the UK won't be the UK anymore and therefore the Royal Family won't have the same appeal as the framework that holds the country together and as we know, anything is possible. However, as a traditionalist, God save the Queen!' he concludes.



Sparkbrook Association, MS 1914.
© Birmingham Libraries and Archives

Bryoney Johnson finds out more about two of the current collaborations that are helping staff across the University to work with and amongst local the local community.

CULTURE in the COMMUNITY

Bromford Dreams

You may have noticed the eye-catching graffiti art displayed recently in University Square. The 'Bromford Dreams' cube is the result of a collaborative project between Dr Chris Shannahan, of the Department of Theology and Religion, and an internationally renowned graffiti artist, to help young men from a deprived east Birmingham estate to project their experiences and hopes through art.

For the last 18 months Dr Shannahan, a Research Fellow in Urban Theology, has been working with unemployed young men from Birmingham's Bromford estate, exploring the impact that social exclusion has on identity and meaning. The men worked to project their frustrations and future hopes onto a giant cube.

'During fieldwork it became clear that young men on the estate express themselves articulately through rap music and graffiti art' says Chris. 'With this in mind I established a relationship with a Birmingham based Muslim graffiti artist Mohammed 'aerosol' Ali who has a great deal of experience working alongside socially excluded Muslim, White and Black youth on graffiti art projects'.

Chris continues 'Over the last ten years, urban youth have been the centre of government social policy, with a big focus on anti-social behaviour and young men who have been put up as convenient scapegoats for images of broken Britain and moral decline. They are more often written off than listened to; this project has given a group of young men who rarely get an opportunity to tell their story, a forum

to do this. The cube raises challenging questions about the relationship between social exclusion and spirituality way beyond the Bromford estate'.

The sides of the cube represent different challenges these men face:

- A sense of powerlessness
- Valuing the importance of life
- A sense of being trapped but a refusal to remain there
- The importance of prayer and a sense of Spirituality and solidarity

Chris concludes 'The cube has received an overwhelmingly positive reaction in the Bromford community. Passers-by stopped to take photos and ask us questions about the project. Following its display on campus, the cube will be displayed at prominent sites across Birmingham, including Centenary Square, and the Drum Arts Centre, and will form the basis for a seminar at the Greenbelt arts festival, before it returns to the Bromford estate. For more information contact Dr Shannahan at c.j.shannahan@bham.ac.uk.

Children's Lives

Another collaborative project for the University is Children's Lives; an exhibition that examines the lives of children from the 18th Century to the present day. The exhibition, has been made possible through a partnership between the University of Birmingham, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, and Birmingham Archives and Heritage.

Children's Lives forms part of Birmingham's contribution to the 2012 Cultural Olympiad programme, and

reveals how the experience of childhood has changed, and has been constructed by adults over time.

The exhibition is a great example of the University working in, and with, local community groups. Although displayed in the centre of the city, Children's Lives has been curated by Professor Ian Grosvenor, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Cultural Engagement, and Dr Siân Roberts, Honorary Research Fellow at the University.

Professor Grosvenor explains 'the exhibition will facilitate a dialogue between academics, heritage practitioners and wider community audiences through a shared engagement with historical research produced from local, national and international archive resources available in the city of Birmingham'.

The exhibition draws on over thirty years of Professor Grosvenor's research into childhood experience. It explores the different ways people have thought about childhood as a stage of life, the relationships of children with their families and peers, and the ways that children have imagined the world.

The exhibition runs at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery until 10 June 2012. There are a number of responses to the exhibition at the University. Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture/childrens-lives/events.aspx to find out more.

Look out for our **Community Buzz Special Edition** – out on **16 May 2012**.

Birmingham:

Building a library... building opportunity

In 2011 the University announced ambitious plans to develop the Edgbaston campus, including the building of a new library. Why should Birmingham make this investment and what does it mean for students, staff and the community? **Kate Pritchard talks to Diane Job, Director of Library Services, to learn more.**

Birmingham has one of the largest academic libraries in the UK: it holds over 2.7 million items, 50,000 subscription and open access e-journals and 275,000 e-books, spread across the main library and the subject specific libraries, housed locally. As you walk up to our main library, across the landscaped quad, it is an impressive building, recognisable from graduation photographs and videos.

So, what is driving the need for a new library?

'We've had a number of feasibility studies looking at what we should do with the main library because it is evident that the building we have isn't fit for purpose now and won't serve us well into the future.' Diane tells me. 'The building was built in the pre-digital age; it was conceived as a space to house a physical collection. Now, of course, printed material makes up only part of our

collection, a very large and increasing part is electronic. We recognise now that people are at the heart of what we do, and we need to build our library, and our services, around what staff, students and the local community will need in the future.' The original building was, in fact, designed in the 1930s but not built until 1959. It was already out of date when the doors first opened!

In many ways the main library project responds directly to feedback Diane and her team have received from students, over a number of years, through various channels, including the National Student Survey (NSS) and International Student Barometer, and through feedback on service. There has been continual student representation during the feasibility

studies and that involvement will continue as the project proceeds. For example, during the course of this summer the existing group study rooms in the current library will be refurbished, and Library Services will be asking for feedback on the rooms to help plan the group study rooms in the new library.

'The project has been thinking about what kind of library we need for the next 50–100 years, and though we can't know the future, we do know that it should be an IT rich, flexible environment: a place where students can work individually or in groups, have silent study, and have all the technologies and resources available that they need to support their learning.'



A new look...

The development plan is to build a brand new library on a site to the west of the current library building and demolish the existing library, opening up the 'green heart' of campus. The new building will be slightly smaller in square metre footprint but there will be more useable space. New technologies will be central to our modern library, and it will improve services and access to resources. How the building will look is still in discussion and the architect images only reflect what it could look like, not what it will look like. One thing is certain it will be a modern building catering to modern needs.

Why new versus old?

Would it not be easier to refurbish our current library? 'Not really,' comments Diane. 'The architects estimate it would take a minimum of six years to refurbish this building and would cause a lot of disruption. Two full cohorts of students would have to live through major building works. We looked at the option of a refurbishment in great detail but it's just not feasible.'

The new library is going to cost the University £57m. **Isn't refurbishment a more cost effective option?** 'It is important to understand the nature of the current building when assessing the costs. The infrastructure is complicated: there have been a number of extensions to the original building which makes it incoherent; library users will know exactly what I mean by that. So, if you then imagine the way the wiring or the plumbing might work, it is not a coherent set of services. To refurbish the building, just the basic services: plumbing, heating and lighting, would cost at least £20m. That's before you've done anything else, before you've even started considering

improvements to the user experience.'

There are other restrictions. In some places the bookcases are integrated into the structure of the building. Even if these were emptied they could not be moved to open up the spaces to provide alternative study spaces. As Diane explains 'All it would mean is we have empty bookcases.'

The new library will also improve energy efficiency, helping the University reduce its emissions and meet its environmental objectives.

Amongst some there is a strong attachment to the frontage of the existing library, not only alumni who fondly remember their graduation photograph, but staff and students who view it as part of the University's heritage. **How do you address concerns that the University is destroying an iconic 'red brick' building?**

'For all the reasons I have described this building will not serve us well into the future. I would ask people to think about what "red brick" actually means?' Diane tells me.

Red brick: often used as an informal term referring to civic universities founded in the major industrial cities of England.



The aim is that doors will open for the autumn term of 2015. The library service and staff will stay in the current building until the new one is complete, moving collections over the summer and minimising disruption.

'It's what those words stand for that is important. The words symbolise the philosophy of the civic university and that's Birmingham's true heritage. The red bricks are a powerful symbol but we don't need to retain this building to retain the spirit of our heritage and I think that is really very important.'

Removing the current library will also open up the 'green heart' of campus which is the view from North Gate down to the Law building. Diane has spoken to people who remember the campus without the current library. 'Many of those people believe the library shouldn't have been built where it is. It effectively cuts off buildings such as Met and Mat and Gisbert Kapp from the rest of campus. Opening up that vista again will be a big welcome to everyone passing by.'

A place to be

The new library will have more open, social space including a cafe, similar to the popular iLounge in the current library, but without the need to go through library security. The library will include the 'Cultural Gateway': a large space that can showcase our cultural collections and open up access to the research taking place across the University. It won't be a permanent art gallery: collections or exhibitions will move through it more frequently, but 'The Cultural Gateway is going to be a very exciting space, I'm sure the displays will open all our eyes to the incredible cultural assets in the University,' comments Diane.

The new library will also form part of the

natural route for students travelling from the train station or from the Vale. It will be a building people pass alongside and pass through. It will be visible as people pass on the train and therefore will be a flagship university building.

Access will also be improved for disabled visitors and for the community. The general public do currently have some access to library resources but there is significant preparatory work being carried out to review and improve this access. It opens up potential, not only for individual study, but could also be of use to small businesses or community groups, reinforcing Birmingham's civic roots, contributing to the community and to the city.

A key feature of the new building will be the use of natural light to invite and inspire. It will be an inspirational space in which to learn. As Diane tells me 'Our campus is beautiful: it is one of the best in the world, and yet if you sit in the library there are very few places where you can look out and draw inspiration. In our new building we want as many study spaces as possible to look out over the "green heart" and toward Aston Webb and, on the other, toward the canal and over the realigned running track. To be able to sit and study and not have a bookcase between you and the view will, I hope, transform the experience of studying in the Main Library.'

Defining the modern library

What is a modern library and what does our library aspire to be? 'There are a number of fantastic library buildings, built

in the last few years that we can learn from. For example, we can look at Aberdeen, Yonsei in South Korea and Humboldt in Berlin and consider why those institutions have designed their libraries the way they have. The underlying theme is to want to inspire people to learn and to research.'

Diane explains that underpinning this theme is the need to connect people with the information they need, in a new information age. 'We can't guess the future but we do know that different technologies will emerge. Here at Birmingham the Heritage Hub and the work they are doing; that's the sort of thing that we want to see in our libraries in the future.'

Does a new technology age mean we will ever see a future without books, without the need for a library? 'No, there will always be a need to access physical material of different kinds and access people who can help you use it. If you think that we don't need libraries anymore what you are focusing on is "the book". Consider what material might have been in the library over time: an early library might have had scrolls and no shelves, shelves were an innovation. We have become used to the idea that a library is a place with books but that's changing; format of material doesn't dictate what a library is about.'

Footfall in libraries across the Russell Group is increasing. This is partly about the space and the collections but it reflects the importance of people in libraries: people who can help support learning. 'Students tell us that it is very important that they have access to people who can help them find their way. In our new library the subject advisors will be much more visible and accessible.'

...for a new library





Circles of influence

The University's Circles of Influence fundraising campaign is supporting the proposed new library and will help the building become a world class facility. See page 21 for further details on phase two of the campaign and its combined £160 million target.

A library is about people

There is certain to be upheaval and disruption for staff working within the library. **How do they feel about the impact of this project on their working life?**

'I have the most fantastic team and they are incredibly excited. That is rooted in their desire to see staff and students have the best possible environment to study and work in. Their working space will be dramatically improved and much more efficient. The building just doesn't work as well as it could for our team. We could achieve much more if we were in a different environment.'

Behind the scenes Diane's team are carrying out a huge amount of work to prepare for the new library and to continue to improve services for users of the current library. As part of the library content programme library staff are, with academic colleagues, reviewing the entire collection, and are also ensuring all items contain an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tag and have a descriptive catalogue record. Building in technology like RFID now opens up opportunities in the future, such as the potential to adopt mobile technology. The process has also had unexpected benefits, Diane explains *'Library staff are building up an even*

better understanding of the depth of the collections and the strengths that perhaps we didn't appreciate before. Birmingham has a very strong tradition of collecting and we often find that we have material that is only available in two or three libraries around the country.'

Subject libraries

Some of the subject specific libraries will be integrated into the new library. The Education, Harding Law and Barber Music libraries will benefit from moving into the new building. Space, accessibility and opening hours will all be improved, and the subject advisors will be more visible. It will also help to highlight that these libraries are accessible to all. As Diane explains *'For example, I think there's a general perception that only music students use the music library and of course that's not true. I'm sure that once the collection is integrated into the new main library there will be a wider understanding of the depth and breadth of the collection we have.'*

An exciting challenge

Diane joined Birmingham in 2009, moving from a role at Imperial College where she managed six libraries that served staff, students and 11 NHS hospital trusts. *'One of the things that drew me to apply*

to Birmingham was because I knew the University had plans for this kind of development. It is an opportunity that very few people get during their career; to have the opportunity to be involved is incredibly exciting. It is a lot of hard work and I'm constantly thinking about the new library and our services.'

Diane recognises the importance her supportive and enthusiastic team play. Despite working in a building with such problems they remain upbeat and positive, focused on the benefits a new library will bring to staff and students. They are also starting to think about the future. *'How we will be working differently in the future. The opening of the doors in 2015 is not the end point. We won't move in and relax. It will be the start of the next big phase in library services.'*

Diane has a quote from Sir Charles Grant Robinson on her wall. He became Vice-Chancellor at Birmingham in 1920 and, Diane tells me, *'In the same year he said "As an acid test of how a university regards its duties and functions as a place of education and learning the university library is almost infallible" I think that sentiment is as true today as it was in 1920. The new library building will be a visible demonstration of the University's enduring commitment to learning, research, education. It will be the physical embodiment of it.'*

meet the TEAM

Project Office:

Unsung heroes of institutional change

Ian Quinnell, Head of Project Office, introduces the team.



Based in IT Services, the Project Office has been part of the University's Professional Services for over six years, and in that time has steadily grown to the nine project managers and four project officers that make up the team today. As a team we have come together from a wide range of backgrounds; from the corridors of local authorities and private sector business to the bulging shelves of libraries and academic research we all bring a unique perspective to the work we do – there is even a yoga instructor amongst the ranks!

At a recent University event the people I was sharing a table with asked me what I did. When I said that I was the Head of the Project Office they all looked pretty unimpressed, one even exclaiming 'wow – that must be boring!' Not too disheartened, I proceeded to tell them about all the work that we have been involved in at the University over the past few years, the BUAFAs, the opening of the new University Centre in Guangzhou China, the new corporate website, the Heritage Hub, PURE the new Research Management System, the list could go on... I am pleased to say that by the end of the night they were asking me for a job.

Our aim is to lead and support strong project management skills across professional services. As well as managing complex, strategic projects in IT Services and Professional Services, we also work to develop project management capabilities in others. Over the past few years, through training and support, we have built up a strong community of staff proficient in project management across the University. Last year over 300 University staff underwent training provided by the Project Office and we are currently rolling out a new wave of Project Management training including simulated project management exercises and project board master classes.

As the institution grows and explores new areas there is an increase of project work being carried out across the campus. Understanding and following a project management methodology is a valuable key that can unlock many of the complexities and challenges that project work can produce. We are keen to develop this community within the University, to share experiences, bad and good, and to celebrate good practice.

We believe it is good to talk and it is always good to listen; so we want to provide an environment for those working in areas of project management to come together to share ideas, experiences and in doing so advance their own understanding. For the Project Office it is a valuable opportunity to establish and maintain contact with those who share our belief that project management, when applied correctly, can be a valuable tool and a vital response to much of the work supporting the University's Strategic Framework.

'Within Academic Services we have worked with the Project Office on a number of strategically important initiatives (Managed Hosting, CLAD, staff communications etc). The support has always been highly skilled, professional, and collegial. Importantly the Project Office has always demonstrated a strong understanding of the environment in which we work. In summary, it has consistently added value to the work of Academic Services and our working relationship is highly valued.'

Brendan Casey, Director of Academic Services

Just some of the projects that we have been involved in recently...

'Have Your Say' Staff Surveys 2009 and 2011

We provided project management to the 2009 and 2011 staff opinion surveys. These projects included everything from designing the question set and surveys forms, publicity and communications, administration, producing and circulating the results and, subsequently, developing the actions plans in Colleges and Corporate Services in response to the survey outcomes. The survey in 2011 elicited over 4000 responses from staff across the University – well above the benchmark for similar institutions. www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/staff/survey

Guangzhou Centre

The Pearl River region in Southern China is an important development area for the University. With assistance from the Project Office, the Guangzhou Centre was set up in 2011. Through this Centre the University works with partners in Guangzhou and the Guangdong region to promote research and educational initiatives across the region. The Centre provides seminar and meeting spaces as well as access to University staff who can support and facilitate projects and partnerships and liaise with local organisations. The Guangzhou Project Board and Team won the Team of the Year award at the 2012 BUAFAs. www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/guangzhou

Circles of Influence

The Project Office has worked closely with colleagues in the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) to plan and launch the Circles of Influence Campaign. In Phase 1 generous alumni and donors raised £60 million pounds to support projects which create a real impact to our students, researchers and campus. The Campaign is now entering its second phase of fundraising, with a new overall target of £160 million, which is all about enabling people to achieve something which will have a local, national, or international impact. www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving/circlesofinfluence

'Working with the Project Office gave us the confidence and reassurance that the Circles of Influence campaign launch was on track at all times. Being clear about the risks, dependencies, and the individual and team responsibilities was critical.'

Nick Blinco, Director of Development and Alumni Relations

Research Management System (PURE)

In close collaboration with teams across IT Services, Planning, HR and the library we are managing the implementation of a new research management system, PURE, that will bring together information about the University's research outputs, projects and income together with research staff information and profiles through



Circles of influence



integration with local systems such as AltaHR, BANNER, CODA and Research Accounting ensuring that there is a single authoritative source of quality-assured information about the University's research activity. PURE will become the central system for research outputs for the University and will be used to compile and submit the REF2014 return. Contact the Project Manager: k.m.clews@bham.ac.uk

Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub

'Two years ago the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub was just an idea championed by a handful of academics. But, from the early days until Christmas 2011, the Project Office provided planning and support ranging from maintaining a risk register to mapping the Hub's increasingly complex networks of cross-sector and cross-disciplinary partners. More than this, the Project Manager was a highly valued critical friend to a multi-million pound initiative during its key development phase.'

Dr Richard Clay, Co-Director of the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub, College of Arts and Law
www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/hclh

IT Strategy

We provide programme management to deliver the University's IT Strategy, which defines the vision and overall direction of travel for the deployment and exploitation of IT capabilities across the University over the next five years. Initiatives such as Mac Support and the UoB student mobile app have already been successfully delivered, with the mobile app receiving a commendation in the Student Experience category at this year's BUAFAs, and with many more projects underway the strategy will deliver a step-change in the desire, capability and delivery of IT across the University. www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/professional/it

iVLE 2.0 Project

The institutional Virtual Learning Environment (iVLE) is the University's primary means of delivering electronic education resources and tools to students. As the core component of the current VLE (WebCT) is reaching the end of its useful life the iVLE Project is reviewing what the requirements of a virtual learning environment are. In collaboration with the Academic Services Project Team we are working with colleagues in Colleges and Professional Services to review the available technology and solutions. The Project Board will report to UEB in June with recommendations for a strategy and roadmap for the development of an iVLE best placed to meet the current and future requirements of staff and students. www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/ivle

How we can help

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide support for the project community across the University we currently provide a range of useful resources through our staff intranet pages, as well as a Project Management handbook to support University staff. Find the Project Office at www.projects.bham.ac.uk

To tie-in with the launch of the new University staff intranet we are currently revamping our webpages with a view to providing a central repository of project management resources in one easily accessible location. A key part of the new website will be the launch of a set of toolkits covering different aspects of project management, to provide project managers and project teams with practical help, hints and tips. The toolkits will cover topics such as Planning, Benefits, Change

Management, Risk and Stakeholder Engagement. Alongside these you will also be able to find information on:

- The project approval process
- Running a project – including roles and project documentation templates
- Training and support
- Events including details of our project management forums
- FAQs
- Project team contact details



Look out for news on the new intranet site launch in upcoming editions of Buzz Bitesize.

If you would like to talk to us about project management skills in your area, about any of the projects that we are involved in or if you would like a handbook you can contact us at projects@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

meet the TEAM



Project Team

Back row: Vicky Holmes, Sophie Tonino, Tim Smith, Jane Moon, Ian Quinnell, Margaret Donnison, Brigit Ayling, Martin Hoarder, Karen Clews, Pippa McNee.
Sofa: Jo England, Emma Griffin.

COLLEGE CATCH-UP: MDS

Funding future health breakthroughs

The University, along with partners in the NHS, has recently won almost £13m to support groundbreaking clinical research into treatments that could benefit thousands of patients each year.

The University of Birmingham, along with University Hospital Birmingham and Birmingham Children's Hospital received £12.8m, the largest share of a £100 million fund to develop new treatments. The money, provided by the National Institute for Health Research, will be spent on research nurses, technicians and equipment at the the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility, one of 19 purpose-built Clinical Research Facilities labs around the UK.

NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts with clinical research facilities submitted bids for the funding, which were then judged by a panel of UK experts in both medical research and in running clinical research facilities. Winning bids were selected on the basis of the quality and volume of world-class medical research they support as well as other criteria including the strength of their partnerships with universities and industry.

A huge number of new treatments for conditions including cancer, diabetes, stroke, dementia and obesity will be developed by researchers at the labs. The funding will also be used to conduct research into rare diseases, gene therapy, trauma, infection and ageing. The team based at Birmingham also has a Health Research Bus which enables them to take their research into the community and



'This new funding will be transformational in ensuring we deliver increased quality and quantity of early phase clinical research, engaging with industry, be it early biotechnology discovery or major established Pharma to rapidly accelerate advances in medicine and to improve the health of the population of Birmingham and beyond.'

Professor Lawrence Young, Head of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences



allow the opportunity for studies to be conducted with difficult-to-reach sections of the population.

The funding is another boost for the Birmingham Health Partners initiative; a landmark joint working agreement between the University of Birmingham, and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. Established in November 2011, Birmingham Health Partners enhances the longstanding working relationship between the two institutions and enables patients to benefit from new therapies delivered by expert clinicians working alongside top research scientists and world-leading clinical trials teams.

Dame Julie Moore, UHB Chief Executive, says *'The Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility provides unrivalled facilities for experimental medicine as the*

main platform to deliver early-phase, cutting-edge translational research in Birmingham. To date, our combined facilities have seen over 70,000 patients in 350 clinical research studies.'

Honorary Graduate, Professor Dame Sally Davies, who is Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department of Health, says *'these are very exciting times for clinical research in the UK, and this funding is a reflection of the commitment we have to supporting world-class experimental medicine. The Clinical Research Facilities will play a key role in supporting advances in treatments for a wide variety of diseases and supporting collaboration with industry. Thousands of people will benefit right across the country.'*



Barnes Library Refurb

On 5 March staff, students, donors and alumni attended a reception marking the completion of the Medical School Foyer and Barnes Library refurbishment project.

Alumni and donors were given a unique opportunity to see the new facilities and meet with students who are already making use of this exemplary space, which has transformed the ground floor of the building for the benefit of medical students for years to come.

Lead donor Sir Doug Ellis OBE spoke on the occasion: *'I have been involved in many charitable projects over the years, but the University of Birmingham has a special place in my heart. In fact, I owe my life to the research and the staff here. Along with all the others who gave, I am delighted to be able financially to support this wonderful project.'*

The £2million project, of which £516,000

was donated by alumni and friends, has brought the original 1939 design of the Medical School building into the 21st century.

Thanks to the generosity of the project's donors and collaborative efforts across the University, the ground floor of the Barnes Library has now been transformed into an innovative hub for all student services, with dedicated student welfare support services and confidential meeting rooms as well as a high demand book collection and a base for Library Services subject advisors. In addition there are flexible study areas with WiFi access, and space for informal and formal student group working, including the latest IT and audiovisual facilities. The University has named this space the 'Doug Ellis Learning Hub' in honour of Sir Doug's generous support.

College of MDS Birmingham Professional Event

Over 130 members of Professional Services staff in the College of MDS attended a Birmingham Professional information and networking event in the Wolfson Centre for Medical Education on 1 March. The event was opened by Dr Emma Robinson, College Director of Operations and Lee Sanders, Registrar and Secretary, gave a short talk on the Birmingham Professional initiative. There were over 20 stalls on a range of issues including having difficult conversations, mentoring, flexible working and Universitas 21 Staff Fellowships. Staff also had the opportunity to talk directly to the Registrar and the Director of Operations about all aspects of the Birmingham Professional and their own personal career development.



'I really enjoyed this event. The stands that I visited were very informative and certainly helped with thinking ahead about my career within the University.'

'Thought it was relevant and engaging, I never stopped talking with people.'

'I found it really useful to hear about where senior people came from and how they achieved their current positions.'



Pharmacy developments coming on a pace

Colleagues are working hard on the development of a new MPharm Pharmacy undergraduate degree in readiness to start accepting applications from this September. Professor John Marriott, who is leading the Pharmacy project group, says *'Pharmacy will complement existing programmes in the College and across the University. There are already parallels in some of the science teaching on the Medical Science and other professional courses and Pharmacy can also work with the MBChB and nursing programmes to enable greater experiences of patient care and stimulate inter-professional learning'*

The new programme is being developed under guidance from the General Pharmaceutical Council and will follow the principles of the Department of Health's Medical Education England's, Modernising Pharmacy Careers which proposes a new approach to pharmacist undergraduate education and pre-registration training. The five-year integrated course will also include a pre-registration year, working with pharmaceutical partners. There will also be the added option for students to intercalate and do study exchanges abroad. Professor Marriott concludes, *'this will have a significant impact on patients and students on a number of programmes and will pave the way for vibrant, well qualified Pharmacists of the future.'* To find out more about the MPharm programme please contact Professor Marriott at j.f.marriott@bham.ac.uk.

BIRMINGHAM @ THE BIG BANG >>

Robbie Roberts shares his experience of the Big Bang Fair 2012.



Sometimes in order to demonstrate that you do world-leading research, you need a skeleton wearing a graduation cap and flashing bow-tie, and a dancing Gorilla...

In March, the University of Birmingham lined up next to other big-hitting organisations in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) community at the Big Bang Fair 2012, held at the National Exhibition Centre. The Fair is the largest annual celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths in the UK and is designed to demonstrate to young people the breadth of exciting opportunities and careers in this field.

Planning for our involvement in the fair began in September 2011 when a selection of activities designed to showcase various research across the Colleges of Medical and Dental Sciences (MDS), Life and Environmental Sciences (LES) and Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS), was submitted to the Big Bang team for their consideration. Fortunately, our academics had come up with such innovative and exciting ideas that it was deemed a 'no-brainer' that the University should be represented there.

Fast-forward seven months and there we were in the thick of a huge science festival, our involvement as extensive and diverse as you would expect of a university with

so much to showcase. Over the three days of the fair, we held six activities on our own 'Interactive Stand', four interactive workshops, and had additional university representation on three of our partner organisations' stands. On the interactive stand we gave young people the opportunity to burn off calories with our Dance Mats, check out the bacteria in their mouths, learn about the complexities of DNA and the work of our Cancer Scientists, meet Andy our tribometer, and learn about the workings and diseases of the eye and the liver. Our interactive workshops 'Am I an Ape' (LES) and 'Change your world' (EPS) ran twice and four times respectively, over two days and we had academic representatives on the Institute of Physics and the British Psychological Society stands as well.

Needless to say, at this event, the University shone. Of the 42,000 people who visited the Big Bang Fair, over 5,000 visited our activity stand while the other 37,000 couldn't have helped but notice us with our enormous hanging banners that dominated the 'The Body Zone' in which we were positioned. Our stand featured a purpose-built central triangular structure with exciting activities taking place on all three sides. Each activity also had bespoke-designed posters to help provide more information about their activities. Over the three days, and six activities, over 40 staff from across the University participated and helped make ours one of the most popular and dynamic stands at the fair. In addition to the stand, our workshops sold out well in advance and received excellent feedback from children and teachers alike.

This event was an example of University teamwork at its very best. An array of people played their part in this success, from the project management team, academics and students across the Colleges of MDS, LES and EPS, to other academic and professional staff across the university helping to provide the kit, props, stand features, and promotion of the event itself.

The enthusiasm with which our academics and students showed when engaging with the young people who visited our stand, was a joy to behold and made me feel so proud to work at this University. The level of engagement ranged from young people genuinely wanting to ask serious scientific questions; to those who just wanted to enjoy the activities we had on offer. I knew we were doing something right when I was in the queue for some food and a young primary school pupil saw my badge and said 'Excuse me, where's your stand? My friend told me I should go and check out Professor Bones and the dancing Gorilla!' (two honorary staff, I believe).



Circles of Influence the next phase

Jo Clarke, Alumni Communications Manager, tells us more about the next phase of the Circles of influence fundraising campaign.



Emma West



Robin Heptinstall

Circles of Influence, the University's innovative fundraising campaign, is entering its next phase. We would like to thank everyone who helped us meet and exceed our initial £60 million total and announce an ambitious new combined target for phase two of the campaign, of £160 million.

Whether it helps transform our campus to meet 21st century students' needs, fund the best academics to tackle global health problems, or ensure we attract the brightest students, irrespective of their circumstances, support from alumni and staff, combined with the University's other income streams, can change lives at Birmingham and across the world.

Our focus projects include:

Student support

From international internships to our pioneering Access to Birmingham widening participation scheme, Circles of Influence is supporting several different projects aimed at improving students' prospects and employability.

Emma West, a 3rd year law student, completed an international placement in Cape Town, South Africa, with the help of the University's International Work Experience scheme. Emma went out to Cape Town in summer 2011, initially working in a human rights office and later with young juveniles and petty criminals.

'My internship has had a profound effect on my studying as well as my future career plans. The financial award of £800 allowed me to afford to go on this fantastic placement,' she says. 'As a result of my trip I have now decided that I don't want to be a solicitor or barrister any more and once I have finished my undergraduate degree, I'm going to do an MA in social work with the view to working with young offenders.'

Children

Autism: Our work in early diagnosis and intervention into this lifelong condition is crucial. Your gifts will help us combine our expertise in autism research, developmental science and paediatric medicine to improve the quality of children's lives.

Children's Cancer: With your support, our Burkitt's Lymphoma researchers can get more African children involved in a potentially life-saving drug trial. Our children's brain cancer team is working to improve diagnosis and treatment of a dangerous and debilitating condition. We need staff and facilities to develop a national programme translating a new scanning technique into clinical practice across the UK and beyond.

Becky Heptinstall brought her son, Robin, to the University when he was three to help get him diagnosed as autistic so the family could access appropriate



Simply text **CIRC02 £5** to 70070 to give today.

What can I do?

From bake sales to half marathons, staff across campus have been having fun and doing their bit to raise funds for the Circles of Influence campaign. To get involved and receive your fundraising pack, contact Laura Clark on 48894 or l.clark.1@bham.ac.uk, alternatively you can now make a gift by text. Simply text CIRC02 £5 to 70070 to give today.

support. Our team also provided 10 weeks of early intervention which greatly improved his ability to be socially interactive.

'When you're a parent of a child with autism your world is very different to that of other parents and I think a lot of parents find it lonely, emotional and very draining,' she says. 'I fully support the University's autism research because anything that can help develop a better understanding of the condition so that people are aware of what children on the autistic spectrum can achieve has got to be beneficial. We need to find ways to enable children, in their own way, to fit into society.'

Library

Help make our plans to construct a state-of-the-art building a reality. **See page 11 for further details.**

For more events please visit
[www.birmingham.ac.uk/
 oncampus.index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus.index.aspx)

Inaugural Lecture

'Towards An Evolutionary Theory of International Relations'

Date/time: **Tuesday 1 May, 5.15pm**

Venue: **Business School Main**

Lecture Theatre (G12)

Professor Ronen Palan, of the School of Government and Society gives his Inaugural Lecture. A reception will be held following this lecture in the Business School Atrium. For a full schedule of upcoming inaugural lectures visit the University events pages www.birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus/index.aspx

Defence Studies Dining Club

Date/time: **Thursday 26 April, 7.00pm**

Venue: **Staff House**

The dining club brings together serving and retired members of the military in the West Midlands, current and emeritus academics, civic dignitaries, and University staff with an interest in security and defence issues. The speaker for the April dining club is the Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, Secretary of State for International Development. The next event is scheduled for Tuesday 13 November when the speaker will be General Sir Nicholas Houghton (Vice Chief of the Defence Staff). The cost of the drinks reception, meal with wine and coffee is £37. For further details, or to register your interest in attending future events, contact Malcolm Kendall on 414 4749.



Cityscapes Panoramic Views on Coins and Medals

Dates: **27 April–6 October**

Venue: **Coin Gallery, Barber Institute**

The world in miniature, its churches, citadels, fortifications, harbours, civic buildings, houses and suburbs, is explored in this absorbing exhibition, the third in a series of shows organised in collaboration with the British Museum. Celebrating the built and cultural heritage of early modern European cities through the most circulated art medium, it focuses on the 16th to the 18th century, when many of the great cities of Europe applied the artistic tradition of the city view to their currency. The exhibition is accompanied by a full programme of educational and music activities, lectures and gallery talks and an international conference.

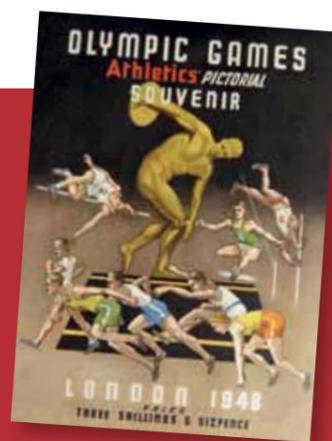
The **BARBER**
Institute of Fine Arts

Bramall Birmingham taster day

It's been hard to miss the amazing building that has popped up in the midst of the long standing Aston Webb crescent and no doubt many of you are curious to experience what the building also has to offer on the inside. We have lots of exciting things happening over the coming months with Bramall festival of music in the autumn, and the University Community day to name but two. One exciting event is our taster day which will

give individuals the opportunity to help with testing the Elgar Concert Hall. For this we would like to invite people to come along, experience the venue, take a tour and give us feedback.

To register your interest in attending this taster session please email Bramallenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk. Watch this space for more exciting opening events and information on Bramall and the Elgar Concert Hall.



Olympic Games exhibition

Dates: **10 May–10 September 2012**

Venue: **Muirhead Tower Atrium**

To celebrate the 2012 London Olympics the Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections are presenting an exhibition about the history of the Olympic Games. The exhibition highlights the 1908 London Olympics, including the tragedy of the marathon runner Dorando Pietri, disqualified as he crossed the finished line. As well as the infamous 1936 Berlin Games, held amid the tensions of Nazi Germany, and the return of the Olympic Games to London in 1948 in the aftermath of the Second World War. The exhibition showcases original photographs and collectables from these early Olympics, drawn from the extensive sports collections of the Cadbury Research Library.

For more information visit
[www.birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus/
 exhibitions/Olympics.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus/exhibitions/Olympics.aspx)

25% discount on your Annual Bus Pass

The University, working in partnership with National Express West Midlands, are offering staff a 25% reduction off the cost of a full price bus pass from April 2012. This is a massive 20% extra discount compared to last year. Existing and new members of this scheme will automatically qualify for this increased discount.

These changes reflect the University's commitment to its Sustainable Travel objectives to increase the number of staff travelling to the University by public transport. To apply visit www.bham.ac.uk/travel/public.shtml



WINTERBOURNE
HOUSE AND GARDEN

EDWARDIAN FETE

Date: **Saturday, 26 May**

Venue: **Winterbourne House and Garden**

Step back in time for a wonderful day out with an array of exciting Edwardian entertainment. There will be music, laughter, competitions, performers and fair rides. Along the lawn there will be stalls selling their wares and delicious Edwardian Afternoon Teas will be on sale in the tea room. In keeping with the village fair feel, there will be a bake-off style competition for produce, preserves and cakes, presided over by a select committee of judges. Our colleagues at Special Collections Cadbury Research Library will be educating us on all things turn of the century in the Old Kitchen, with live demonstrations and the chance to see some of the works from the library. What weird and wonderful things did our Edwardian ancestors eat and why?

Entrance is £6 for adults and £4 for Friends of Winterbourne, children and students. There will be a small charge for some activities so bring your pocket money!

Accommodation to let

Well presented freehold detached traditional three bedroom house.

Good location – Moseley/Kings Heath border in popular cul-de-sac. Offers £249,950. Tel 07941 437 009.

3 bedroom house – B29: Central heating, double glazing, off-road parking, 70ft garden. Part furnished. Near shops, bus routes, University. Staff/postgrads. £600pcm. Available from early June 2012. eklaar@gmail.com 07922 151 313.

Events

New look for classic comedy: Solihull Theatre Company present the Musical 'SUGAR', an adaptation of the screen-play 'Some like it hot'. Solihull Arts Complex 15–19 May 2012. Box Office: 0121 704 6962 www.solihullartscomplex.co.uk

Services

Is it time for your chimney to be swept? Or are you thinking about have a log-burning stove installed?

If yes, please contact C&T Chimney Innovations on 07864 120483
www.ctchimneyinnovations.co.uk

Class One Decorating: Highest quality internal and external painting and decorating. Friendly, professional service. Free, no-obligation quotes. Tel: 0121 441 3344 or 07976 678863 info@classonedecorating.co.uk
www.classonedecorating.co.uk

Gardening work in all seasons undertaken: including fencing, patios, decking, garden tidying/clearances and gutter clearing. Contact Chris 0121 459 3292 or 07890 246911.



**Sunday 10 June 2012,
11.00am–4.00pm**

Free fun for all the family

Fun fair, culture trails, live music, climbing wall, dinosaur dig, dance mats, question time, arts and crafts and much more.

For further details visit
www.birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus/index.aspx
 or call 414 8130