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**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**



Professor Adam Tickell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
for Research and Knowledge Transfer

Creating a dynamic research environment *for the future*

YOUR BUZZ

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Front cover image: Dr Anna Phillips,
Reader in Behavioural Medicine

As a University we can be proud that our research has a major impact on the city, the region and the world. To maintain this exciting and cutting edge work we have to continually invest in resources, and improve research facilities to ensure that our academic community is able to pursue ideas, undertake research and transfer knowledge to ensure significant global impact. One of the goals identified in the Shaping Our Future strategy focuses on Enhancing our Research Power, and as we pass the midpoint of this five year strategy we can already see many examples of how teams across the University are delivering initiatives that will help to achieve this vital goal.

The quality of both the people and the assets within the research community in Birmingham is such that we have a great potential to achieve excellence. The next few years are going to be really tough for the UK university sector, but we are continuing to invest in resources across the campus to ensure that we are able to continue to deliver quality research with worldwide impact. New systems such as PURE and advancements in research computing are enabling academics to interact with, and manage their research data and activity in different ways.

Recent successes in bringing new research funding into the University can be built on to continue to grow our research as effectively and as strongly as possible. The excellent work of teams such as the College based Research Support Offices and Research and Innovation Services is vital in this endeavour and initiatives such as the Research Support Toolkit will ensure that focused support and guidance is available to researchers

about research funding opportunities.

In addition to this internal drive for excellence, the UK Research Councils are increasingly driving the agenda for transparency and open access for research data, and pushing for the development of common principles on data management:

'Publicly funded research data are a public good, produced in the public interest, which should be made openly available with as few restrictions as possible in a timely and responsible manner that does not harm intellectual property.'

This is a complex area, and the University supports the principles of transparency – but we are simultaneously working to protect the intellectual investments made by our academics. This political challenge is matched by the technical challenge of providing a safe and suitable repository for our research data, but it is a challenge that we as an institution are meeting head-on. The innovative MidPlus data store and archive, as well as providing a service to partner universities, is a valuable proof of concept of what can be delivered for the benefit of the research community in Birmingham.

Whether it is the introduction of systems such as PURE, investments in groundbreaking IT solutions, or the development of outstanding support services for academics, we are working together to ensure the best possible environment in which our research community can excel.

*Adam Tickell,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research
and Knowledge Transfer*

Research developments

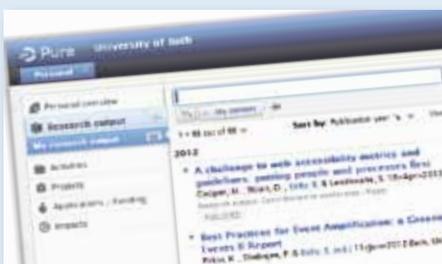
Discover PURE

PURE is a database that stores and integrates information on research activity in a structured and standardised way. Since December 2011 the PURE project team has been working to integrate PURE with University systems, bringing together information from AltaHR, Banner Student Records, CODA, and the Publications system to create a single authoritative source of quality-assured information about the University's research activity.

PURE offers academics the chance to view more data than ever before about research activity and researcher profiles. PURE has been rolled out to most Schools, and all REF eligible academics have a PURE profile that will provide a single location to capture research-related activities such as:

- publications
- collaborations with staff and organisations within and outside the University
- activities and events
- research projects and grants

PURE is designed to make it easy to keep information up-to-date, providing an overall picture of research activities at the University. Having been entered into PURE once, data can be linked to research groups, used to create CVs and bibliographies, and in the future will be used to automatically populate personal and research group web pages.



An important aspect of PURE is the REF14 module that is being used by the Planning Office to compile and submit the University's REF14 submission. So, if you haven't already, log onto PURE and have a look at what's in your profile, have a go at adding some new publications or activities, or try creating a CV. For support with using PURE visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/pure

BlueBEAR

From 'Medieval Warfare', to 'Train Slipstreams' the Birmingham Environment for Academic Research (BEAR) has helped the University's research community delve deeper into their research. Traditional research revolves around experimentation and theory, BEAR brings a third option – computation. BEAR allows users to host their computational work on the research cluster, leaving PCs free for other tasks.

Dr Khamis Essa, of Metallurgy and Materials, says 'BEAR allowed me to transfer the knowledge I gained during my PhD study, and help students to start using this invaluable service'. These training courses were part funded by IT Services and the 'Good Ideas' fund, which has helped many postgraduates kick-start their research. BEAR also facilitates special interest groups which allow staff and students to collaborate. For further details please contact bearinfo@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Research Computing Developments

The University's Research Computing services are being modernised and expanded. The project will introduce several new services including a large-memory facility for data mining, a visualisation server for interactive

and collaborative visualisation, a render farm for off-line rendering, and a dedicated resource for the Particle Physics grid. Planning is also underway to introduce a Windows HPC cluster facility, which will bring the power of cluster computing to desktop applications. For further details visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/it/contact



Research support toolkit

Research and Innovation Services (RIS), in collaboration with College Research Offices, have created an exciting new Research Support Toolkit to provide academic staff with concise and precise information on research opportunities. This single source of information provides a consistent and continued source of information and help. It is hoped that this resource will help to save staff time; enabling them to focus on work and opportunities that are most relevant to them. The Research Support Toolkit includes:

- University Research News
- Workshops
- Research Funding Guide
- Proposal Examples
- Funder Lists and Funding Calendar
- Working with Funders
- Research Support Blog

Visit this exciting new resource at intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/research-support/



The Project Office work to support the management and delivery of key strategic projects. Involvement in projects such as PURE, and Research Computing helps to ensure joined up and effective delivery of multiple projects relating to the Research Excellence agenda. For more information about how projects are supported across the University visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/projects.

Duke of Kent visits campus



The Duke of Kent visited campus on Thursday 22 November, meeting Birmingham academics from across Life and Environmental Sciences, Medical and Dental Sciences and Arts and Law. The two-hour visit began with a meeting between the Duke and Dr Steve Sadhra, Acting Director of the Institute for Occupational and Environmental

Medicine, of which the Duke is Patron. The Duke then toured the Centre for Clinical Haematology meeting staff from the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research funded Trials Acceleration programme, before moving on to the Human Biomaterials Resource Centre. The visit concluded at the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub during

which Dr Richard Clay demonstrated how innovative technologies are being used to make vast riches of visual, audio, and textual content accessible in exciting ways for everybody from children through to Professors.



A pioneering joint venture company, Bioscience Ventures Ltd, and an innovative partnership with Birmingham City Council which developed a climate modelling tool have both been recognised at the prestigious Lord Stafford awards held last week.

Bioscience Ventures collected the Open Collaboration award demonstrating impact from a University and business partnership. The University collaborated with commercial partner Abingdon Health Ltd to form a joint venture company called Biosciences Ventures Ltd. The company was created to enhance and expand commercial applications of Intellectual Property (IP) created by the University.

The award for Environment Sustainability went to the BUCCANEER project (Birmingham Urban Climate Change and Neighbourhood Estimates of Environmental Risk). The project, created as a partnership with the University and Birmingham City Council, developed an interactive online tool for enhancing decision making amongst city planners, public health and developers to deliver a more sustainable future for Birmingham. For the first time decisions

University recognised for knowledge transfer excellence

can be taken with consideration of the varying heat stress across the city caused by the urban heat island and the likely impacts of climate change up to 2100.

Professor David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor, said, *'the Lord Stafford Awards pioneered championing the importance of collaborations between universities and industry. I am especially proud of the University of Birmingham's own record of success in supporting business growth and I am delighted that two of our innovative partnerships have been recognised'*.

Dr Chris Hand, Executive Chairman of Bioscience Ventures said *'We are delighted to receive the Lord Stafford Award for Open Collaboration which recognises Abingdon Health's approach to commercialising innovation. The University of Birmingham has a first class medical diagnostics science base and we are delighted to be helping to commercialise this science for the benefit of patients and other stakeholders. We believe that ventures like ours are vital to unlocking the potential of the knowledge economy and keeping Britain competitive'*.

BP establishes UK undergraduate scholarship fund

Birmingham is one of nine universities across the UK that has been selected by BP, one of the UK's leading graduate recruiters, to be part of its new scholarship programme for talented science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) undergraduates. In its first year, the £450,000 BP scholarship programme will provide 90 scholarships, each worth £5,000, and will support ten scholars at each of the nine universities. As the programme is rolled out over the initial four years, it will be expanded year on year, providing a total scholarship fund of up to £4.5million. The fund will then progress as an annual scholarship programme providing funding of up to £1.8million each year.

Aimed at building capacity in skills and knowledge in the energy industry, the scholarship programme focuses on supporting the education and development of the next generation of engineers and scientists. Emma Judge, Head of graduate resourcing, BP, commented; *'STEM graduates' problem solving and quick thinking capabilities help drive innovation and development in business. BP is committed to investing in tomorrow's talent, from all social backgrounds, and preparing students for long and successful careers – and we'd like them to be in the energy sector'*.

INSPIRING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) supports interdisciplinary endeavour and hosts public events of interest to the University and the community. IAS grew from an idea that in order to exploit our unique breadth of disciplines and co-location of colleagues there was a need for more effective collaboration. Under the directorship of Professor Malcolm Press, Head of College of Life and Environmental Sciences, IAS's mission is to facilitate interdisciplinary research that is driven by ideas from our academic community.

It is clear from the overwhelming response to calls to apply to host an IAS workshop that there is an appetite across the University for collaboration and potential for major interdisciplinary projects. Since the first workshop 'Researching Africa' in June, colleagues from every School in the University, and delegates from the UK, Europe and North America have attended workshops. Eleven of our forty workshop leaders submitted proposals for the inaugural IAS Themes which will be Regeneration Economies, led by Professor John Bryson and Dr Lauren Andres, and Saving Humans led by Dr Sadiah Qureshi and Dr Benjamin

Thomas White. The themes will be formally launched on 10 April 2013, running for eighteen months, and integrated with interests beyond immediate disciplinary boundaries. The aim is to generate novel research activity which is internationally-leading and sustainable.

IAS activity is currently taking place across campus and there will be dedicated IAS space at Westmere in Selly Oak which is being refurbished extensively to provide meeting and seminar facilities to support creative thinking and collaboration. The house will also have six apartments to allow us to accommodate visiting fellows from across the world.

The IAS team are Malcolm Press, Director; Sue Gilligan, Deputy Director and Manger; and Sarah Myring, IAS Administrator. Sue is happy to be contacted with any questions (s.gilligan@bham.ac.uk) and is also keen to have feedback on IAS activity as well as suggestions for future activity. Malcolm, Sue, and Sarah have been attending team briefings, School away days and research meetings to provide updates; if you think that your team would find this useful then contact Sue who can arrange this for you.

'Research at the highest level is increasingly cross-disciplinary; we can no longer just hide within our own little research sub-domains. The establishment of the Institute of Advanced Studies provides a great opportunity to develop ideas with people across campus and to increase the impact of our research. The IAS funded 'Human Decision Making' workshop allowed Psychologists, Economists and Computer Scientists to sit down and discuss a common problem, that nonetheless is usually treated separately within each discipline.'

Ulrik Beierholm, Computational Neuroscience

'IAS enables research dialogues to occur across the various sciences and humanities and provides a useful mechanism for attracting visiting academics to the University as well as representatives from business, the third sector and government.'

John Bryson, Professor of Enterprise and Competitiveness

'IAS is a great initiative which will help Birmingham develop one of its biggest strengths – its breadth'

Heather Widdows
Professor of Global Ethics

'IAS has enabled me to do a number of things that would have otherwise proved difficult: my ideas were not constrained by tick-box criteria – on the contrary, I was encouraged to follow my own vision'

Jonathan Grix,
Sport Politics and Policy

Get involved with IAS

For more information, including details of how to propose a workshop, visit birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/ias Securing support for a one or two day workshop is simple, as long as the idea or topic is multi-disciplinary and brings together expertise from across the University.

Follow IAS on
Twitter @IAS_UoB



Celebrating RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

The University recently announced a rise of 55% in research funding in one year. New grants from Research Councils have risen by 80%, grants from government departments have doubled, and awards from overseas and industry have trebled. *Is this the start of a new era for research at Birmingham?*

Kate Pritchard spoke to Professor Adam Tickell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer, to find out more.

'The new research grant awards increase is the highest figure we've ever had. Every College saw a growth and for most it was a record growth. Analysis has shown that a record number of newly appointed staff contributed to that. It feels like a very concerted effort.'

How can we sustain this going forward?

'It's going to be a real challenge. The external funding environment is probably more hostile than it's been in my working lifetime. We all know that public spending is under extreme pressure at the moment but many competitor nations are investing significantly in research and it is important for our economic future that the UK continues to support university research. Even in a difficult environment, though, there is a renewed sense of ambition at Birmingham. We have made some outstanding appointments, existing staff are applying for more research grants and putting in better applications, and the professional support is really strong. So I think for all those reasons we can think optimistically.'

Is there anything we can do to influence potential cuts to research funding?

'The Vice-Chancellor, as Chairman of the Russell Group, is able to articulate the

views of the 24 most significant research universities in the UK and he is able to demonstrate to government that universities in the UK are not only excellent, but contribute to UK economic competitiveness. Others in the University, including members of University Executive Board like myself and many academics, are also working to show how we not only generate outstanding knowledge but also contribute to economic growth. A really good example of that is the £20m funding we recently got from HEFCE to support an investment of £40m from Rolls Royce in the High Temperature Research Centre at the University. This new centre is important because it will lead to transformational science and also because it underlines how integral we are to competitiveness and how highly valued we are by key industrial partners. This was a great example of public investment unlocking a major private sector contribution.'

What is the impact of our collaborations and partnerships?

'Increasingly research funders are not interested in who you are. They are interested in the problem you can solve, the research question that you can address or the intellectual contribution you can make. Often, very few places have all of

the expertise, so when we work in partnership it gives us competitive edge. We have developed a collaboration fund between Birmingham and Nottingham which will, for example, allow academics to identify common themes of interest to explore at a pre-research grant level and develop really compelling offers.'

What has been the impact of the Birmingham Fellows?

'The Birmingham Fellows are the best single cohort of academic talent we've ever infused into the University. To be able to bring in excess of 30 people at an early stage of their career who are ambitious, bright, publishing in the best places, and generating research grants, has made a transformational difference both within that group and with the people they are working with.'

Why are the Fellows attracted to Birmingham?

'The offer is very attractive; five years of a research fellowship followed by a permanent job. For people at this stage of their career this is very unusual and it gives them an opportunity to establish themselves as genuine leaders in their disciplines. They have tended to go into our strongest Schools and so the really



strong groups are attracting really strong people. I also think there is a sense that Birmingham is a place that is moving like nowhere else. It's a very exciting place to come to at the moment and that's a big part of it.'

It is really exciting to have fresh talent but how are we supporting existing research staff?

'The quality of the professional support in all Colleges is immeasurably improved. In some we have developed grant clinics to help them write better research grants. In all there is an expectation that all research grants will be internally peer reviewed in order for academics to raise the quality. Often the core ideas can be brilliant but if you express them in a way that doesn't work for the grant committee they can be rejected.'

Are we prepared for the Research Excellence Framework (REF)?

'We are preparing for REF. I think the REF is probably the single most important thing facing the University at the moment. We didn't do well in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 2008 and that has had very serious financial and reputational consequences for the University. This REF is a game changer for us and if we don't

make significant movement the University has a gloomy future. I do feel confident that we are in a much better place but there is a lot of work to be done.' All the evidence that we have is that the changes we've seen to grant awards will be reflected in a much better outcome for the REF than at the last RAE.'

Are people struggling with the concept of 'impact'?

'I think we have to recognise that philosophically some academics have a problem with the idea that universities should be making an impact, whether that is financial, political, social or societal. However, in terms of the REF I don't think there is a significant issue of us not having strong impact case studies. For me it is a political imperative for university funding that we continue to demonstrate that we are of value to the people that fund us, and at a time when the publically funded sector is facing such serious cuts, impact in the REF is a very good way of demonstrating how important we are.'

Should we engage more with the wider public and, if so, how do we do this?

'I think it is essential that we do, not just at Birmingham but at all universities. Not only because the public fund us, but

also because we have very important and interesting things to say. I think Birmingham does this better than most other universities in the UK. Although the appointment of Professor Alice Roberts is our most obvious example of public engagement, there are a wide range of activities across the academic disciplines that demonstrate that Birmingham's academics enjoy, and are good at, communicating their research. Every week of every year, our academics are in the national and international press and broadcast media outlining new findings or commenting on policy or politics, and many academics from across the disciplinary spectrum contribute to the formation of local, national and European policy.'

What are your greatest challenges and priorities?

'I think the greatest challenge is making transformational change in a time of declining resource rather than rising resource. My real core priority is to ensure that people understand us as being a centre of research excellence. What we really want to do is have a university that people are proud to work at because they understand that we are one of the best research institutions. I think that is absolutely achievable for us.'



Cultural Collections: *creating and supporting research*

The University's Cultural offer includes a diverse range of collections, museums and galleries, such as The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, the Cadbury Research Library, Winterbourne House and Garden and The Lapworth Museum of Geology. The Research and Cultural Collections department cares for and exhibits collections, displayed both within related departments and around the campus. Many pieces are vital for academic research projects, which range from the examination of an Ancient Egyptian Canopic Jar to the role of tennis in art.

The Lapworth Museum of Geology

The University recently confirmed that The Lapworth Museum has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund Development grant of £130,000 towards a major redevelopment project. The project will create an improved visitor experience and widen the museum's access to young people, the public, and schools.

Volunteers are needed to help shape the content, themes and layout of the museum to ensure it meets the expectations of diverse audiences. This could include taking part in focus groups, becoming a member of a volunteer advisory group, or helping with specific tasks as the project develops.

Its collection of over 250,000 objects

includes significant material from many influential geologists, scientists and collectors of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Encompassing geological pioneer Charles Lapworth's collection, Fred Shotton's top secret work for the D-Day landings, and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's geology collection.

The Lapworth houses some of the region's finest fossils, recording intervals when Central England was submerged beneath warm tropical seas or covered in coal forests, whilst the remains of woolly mammoths provide a glimpse of life during the Ice Age. The mineral and gem collections, some of which date back to the 18th century, contain over 15,000 specimens from all over the world.

The proposal for redevelopment will retain the museum's Edwardian interior, with a state-of-the-art interactive and tactile museum experience.

Learning resources will also enable schools to find out about a range of geological and environmental issues via a web-based environmental science knowledge hub. New 'discovery labs' will provide unique access to current research at the University on environmental change, the history of life, and the earth's resources.

Professor Malcolm Press, Head of College of Life and Environmental Sciences, says *'the redeveloped museum will provide an outstanding visitor experience with*

accessible and engaging exhibitions and activities that will benefit the museum's public and university audiences and will be a unique resource for the region and nationally.'

This funding is vital in terms of research at the University, as for over 130 years the Lapworth and its collections have supported teaching and research. The museum underpins research activity of palaeobiologists in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, and there is a strong tradition of publication based on Lapworth collections. There are over 600 papers and monographs based on the palaeontological collections alone.

Lapworth collections are a major resource for academic research at regional, national and international levels, and are utilised by UK and overseas research workers via visits to the museum and a loan system to researchers around the world.

Researchers can access details of the collections from websites, collection databases and catalogues. Individual objects can also be studied within the Lapworth's dedicated research facilities.

Those interested in being involved in helping to shape development of the Lapworth Museum via focus groups, and project updates, can find out more and register at birmingham.ac.uk/lapworth-grant



The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Academic research is fundamental to the Barber Institute's exhibition programme and publications. It has established a tradition of in-focus exhibitions that study a single masterpiece from its world-class collection through contextualisation with related works. The current exhibition, 'In Front of Nature: The European landscapes of Thomas Fearnley' (on display until 27 January) is the latest example of this style. The accompanying publication includes pioneering research by University, freelance, and museum-based specialists. There are plans for future research-driven exhibitions based around works by Flinck, Rosselli, Nevinson, Veronese and Steen. The Barber is extremely keen to work with staff and students on collaborative, research-driven exhibition projects, and Robert Wenley, Deputy Director at the Barber, has proposed the creation of an Academic Advisory Board that would help to inform exhibition and public programmes.

The Cadbury Research Library

The Cadbury Research Library is working with the School of History and Cultures and the Centre for West Midlands History on a project using the University's heritage archive collections. Guided by Dr Malcolm Dick from the School of History and Cultures, and Dr Helen Fisher, Archivist responsible for the University's institutional archives. Postgraduate students from the College of Arts and Law are working with

primary materials in the University archives. This includes carrying out research into the student experience at the University in the past, using archival material to produce a picture of student life, and adding to the contemporary archive by collecting or creating sources using film, social media and photography. The project will provide opportunities for students to enhance their knowledge of the heritage and cultural sector and develop skills in working with primary sources.

Research and Cultural Collections

The Research and Cultural Collections have grown across the University, where they display small museums and collections. The contents are widely varied, from Pop Art to historic scientific instruments, and some are embedded within the departments related to their subject areas. Curators work closely with academics and researchers to encourage further research, whether studying Hausa textiles in the Centre of West African Studies or investigating the history of midwifery at the Medical School.

In the Research and Cultural Collections Study Centre we can bring together artefacts from many of these collections, so that they can be handled and studied in detail. Much of the material was originally collected for research and teaching purposes such as this. If you would like to use the study centre for your research, please contact: rcc@contacts.bham.ac.uk



Winterbourne House and Garden

Winterbourne House and Garden has strong relationships with a broad range of departments across the University, where its collections make an important contribution to research and study projects. Biosciences students have recently used hives located at Winterbourne to study the overwintering habits of native bumblebees. A partnership between Winterbourne staff, Cancer Studies and Chemistry departments has also been looking at how naturally recurring molecules in plants may hold the secret to treat Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia. A new initiative at Winterbourne, Urban Veg, has been working to promote Urban Food production and working closely with local schools, community groups and the NHS. Winterbourne worked with members from Birmingham's Islamic Communities to grow vegetables in the Walled Kitchen Garden. Participants in the project were taught the art of growing their own food through sustainable methods by the dedicated Garden team. In order to showcase the work undertaken during this project Winterbourne hosted an exhibition, in April 2012, of photographs and artwork produced by participants.

The Blue Plaque Trail

The Blue Plaque Trail celebrates our history as a research university and highlights material from the Research and Cultural Collections and the Cadbury Research Library. For more information: birmingham.ac.uk/culture/collections/blueplaque.aspx

The Cultural Gateway

Opening in 2016 as part of the new Main Library, the Cultural Gateway will be an innovative space demonstrating our world-leading research through exhibitions, events and performances. For further details on University Culture and Collections visit birmingham.ac.uk/culture/index.aspx



meet the
TEAM

Research & Innovation Services

‘Creating opportunities for new research, more income and increased impact’

Dr James Wilkie, Director of Research & Innovation Services (RIS) introduces the team.



Dr James Wilkie



General Office L–R:
Sema Zlomuzica, Dr James Wilkie, Lesley Hewitt

To find out more about RIS visit birmingham.ac.uk/ris or follow the team on Twitter @UoBRIS

Research & Innovation Services provides very experienced specialists to support a wide range of new opportunities being created by and for academic staff across the University. If you want to improve your research grant success rate, apply for European funding, put together a complicated research partnership, protect and commercialise your best ideas, provide consultancy services or start up a business, we have specialists to support you.

You may not know that RIS also includes the management and operation of two subsidiary companies, Alta Innovations and Birmingham Research Park, on behalf of the University and that experts in these companies are an integrated part of the RIS team.

Last year RIS staff played a significant part in attracting around £70m of income to the University. Although our specialist teams have quite different skills, we all get a real buzz from bringing together different people to form new partnerships and do something that none of them could have done on their own. It's very rewarding to attract increased EU funding, win a big research grant for the University, see an inventor receive their first royalty payment or attract third party investment into one of our spin out companies.

Alta Innovations

Alta Innovations is the University's technology transfer company. The team explore how ideas can be developed into products or services either through licensing to a commercial partner or through the creation of a new spin-out company. They also offer a professional service to University academics looking to undertake private consultancy as part of the 30 day rule.

Birmingham Research Park

The team host and encourage the formation and growth of technology or knowledge-based companies and have strong experience in assisting companies in the incubation process. To help achieve this, they provide a wide range of support on-site, such as technical assistance and financial and professional advice.



Birmingham Research Park and Alta Innovations

L-R standing: Jackie Potter, Melanie Kaiser, Robbie MacKenzie, John Pearson, Alan Tibbatts, Jo Wain, Jonathan Watkins, Simon Freeman
L-R sitting: Alan Folwell, James Wilkie, Carol Featherstone



Research Information and European Funding Support Team

L-R Standing: Branwen Hide, Naeem Quereshi, Xavier Rodde, Caroline Marshall
L-R sitting: Sally Wiley, Simon Broadley

Research Information and European Funding Support Team

The team provides information and guidance on research funding opportunities via well established channels such as workshops and the University research newsletter. They support academic staff to apply for European Union research funding (FP7 and soon Horizon 2020) and also once the projects are awarded. The team provides oversight support for electronic application systems such as JeS as well as research output systems. The team is also responsible for managing the University's Brussels Office and facilitating its use by academic staff.

Spinout Venture Development and Commercial Intelligence

The team carries out market intelligence research on behalf of our academic staff and Alta Innovations to advise on commercial opportunities for new innovations, and to inform commercial development strategies. They also direct the commercial development of potential new ventures for the University, and manage the relationship between the University and its portfolio of spinout companies.



Strategic Research Projects and Partnerships Team

L-R Standing: Fiona Heatlie, Steve Taylor, Stephanie Maloney, Mark Humphries, Richard Simpson
L-R sitting: Paul Edwards, Dev Gill

Strategic Research Projects and Partnerships Team

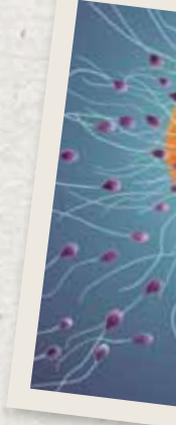
The team supports the development of complex, interdisciplinary, high value or high risk research projects, typically requiring approval by University Executive Board. They support academic engagement with business through development of proposals for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Technology Strategy Board and ERDF funding, and through the Science City Research Alliance. The team manage limited submission calls from funders, internally distributed funds such as the Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration Fund, and work to strengthen institutional relationships with our key funders.



Spinout Venture Development and Commercial Intelligence

L-R: David Coleman and Stephen Ellis

MAKING AN IMPACT



We've probably all heard about 'impact', but what is it all about, and why is it important? Buzz finds out more about impact, and the role it will have in the Research Excellence Framework.

The REF definition of impact is *'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'*. This displays not only the cross disciplinary breadth of impact, but also the many wide reaching benefits that it can produce.

What is impact?

The research and teaching carried out and supported across the University obviously has wide ranging and long lasting impact on students, staff, external partners, and alumni, but what exactly do we mean when we talk about the theme of 'impact' at Birmingham?

Impact not only applies to the excellent advances that our academics and researchers are making to the understanding and application of their work, but also the many contributions that research and outreach work carried out by colleagues across the University is making to communities, policy makers, public services and the economy. Impact is talked about in two main areas; as part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and as an element of application processes for research grants.

How is impact judged?

Although many would agree that impact is displayed daily in the results of research and outreach work, there are also several ways that it is defined in terms of the REF and research bids. Applicants for Research Council funding need to complete a 'pathways to impact' section in their application. This is about possible future ways in which their research could have impact. The REF also requires impact case studies, showing ways in which research projects have had a positive impact on society outside academia. There is no expectation that all of our research will show impact, but we are expected to show that some of the research we do has a positive effect on the world around us.

Since autumn 2011 colleagues from across Colleges and Professional Services have been identifying and writing up case studies for the REF. This has revealed the extensive impact achieved by Birmingham

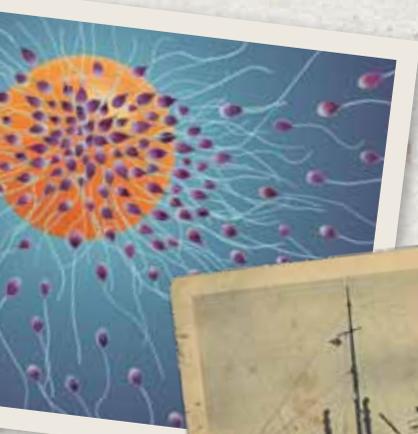
researchers across a wide range of disciplines; from ground-breaking Medical and Engineering research, to exciting and interesting examples of work with community groups, journalists, educators, local councils and a variety of heritage organisations. There is also a strong emerging theme around beneficial impact for the people of Birmingham. There is no doubt that we will have many good impact stories to tell in our REF return, as you can read in some of our examples on the next page.

How is impact supported?

PURE, the University's new research information system, has the facility to record information about ongoing impact activities. Academic colleagues are encouraged to use this facility, which will help in the future preparation of impact case studies, and provide evidence of the range and extent of research-related activities. Turn to page three of this edition of Buzz for more information on PURE.

College Research Support Offices also provide support on drafting Pathways to Impact sections of grants, and the REF team is supporting and enhancing impact case studies. Support for delivering impact is available locally in Colleges through various schemes, and also from Research and Innovation Services, the Business Engagement team, Alta Innovations, Marketing and Communications and other colleagues in Professional Services.

Visit intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/university/ref/impact to find out more, and to read more profiles with colleagues who are at the forefront of outreach and impact across the University and beyond.



IMPACT IN ACTION

We are developing mathematical models and analysis methods to understand sperm motility – how human sperm migrate to the egg. Motility is probably the most common cause of male subfertility, however there are no current treatments that directly target this problem. We are working to understand the physical aspects of this process better so that we can advise on development and screening of new treatments. We work with external groups such as The Centre for Human Reproductive Science, and Birmingham Women's Hospital. This connection to the NHS has stimulated other work applying mathematical analysis to clinical research, and I now also collaborate with plastic surgeons, trauma specialists and endocrinologists. The University's BlueBEAR supercomputer cluster has transformed the way we can run detailed simulation studies of cells. IT Services colleagues have also been very helpful, providing networked server access for collaboration across multiple sites, and a comprehensive set of Matlab toolbox software for our simulations.

Dr David Smith, Lecturer in Applied Mathematics

The thyroid research group has made many contributions to improving knowledge about the frequency, diagnosis, and treatment of thyroid disorders and thyroid cancer. We have, through our research, contributed to national and international guidance documents and patient information sources, and have enhanced post graduate training in endocrinology at a national level. I believe it is always important to question why you're doing a particular piece of research and to consider what the end result might be. For me, this could be anything from increasing basic scientific knowledge around cancer cell biology to improving clinical care for those with thyroid cancer, and having our research informed by an understanding of 'real-world' health questions is very beneficial. Our research has given the opportunity to work with a wide range of people, including scientists, research nurses, and clinicians, whilst having direct dialogue with patient groups helps us understand their position and the issues they believe need addressing.

Professor Jayne Franklyn, Head of Clinical and Experimental Medicine

My research has enabled me to provide expert knowledge on prerequisites for political transformation processes in Egypt and Palestine, working with Islamist movements, government, opposition and civil society representatives to facilitate the EU's understanding of the targets of its democracy promotion efforts. I also work more widely, for example I recently organised an event on The Arab 'Spring' as part of the ESRC's annual Festival of Social Science. This event brought around 50 local students to the University for a programme of activities including a lecture delivered by myself on the topic, an Egyptian guest speaker's personal experience of the revolt in his country, and a campus tour. This engagement provides me with a much more nuanced insight into the 'political' world that I am trying to comprehend through my research, and helps me to prepare informed briefings and papers. I also learn a lot from engaging with pupils who bring their own personal experiences. It is a very fulfilling part of my job and helps me immensely in my personal development!

Michelle Pace, Reader in Politics and International Studies

Since 2008 I have been working on 'unearthing' texts that have remained unknown for more than 40 years due to Francoist censorship and the transition to Democracy in Spain. I have prepared scholarly editions of two texts by Cecilia García de Guilarte and María Beneyto, making them available to wider audiences through public talks, a documentary, and a blog. The production of the documentary *A Boat Laden With...* in collaboration with Cary Parker, has led to joint activities with the Museum of History of Cataluña and the Museum of Exile. The 'impactful' side of my research has instigated discussions about the importance of the recovery of historical memory and proposed new ways of contemplating the past. The most valuable thing has been seeing how my research has come to life through the interaction with different audiences, how what I do has an impact on people's lives and how a project like this has significance for them. Though academic skills and methods are necessary to carry out work of this kind, its ultimate value and reality lies with the wider audience. I am very thankful to the Research and Knowledge Transfer Fund from the College of Arts and Law, without its support, this project would have not come to fruition.

Dr Mónica Jato, Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies

Research support: from workshops to wind tunnels

Bryoney Johnson meets some of the Professional Services staff who are helping to enhance research developments and delivery across the University.



As well as performing the day-to-day tasks that keep the laboratory running smoothly I have also been actively involved in research within the labs. Most recently I have worked alongside academic colleagues Professor Chris Franklin, and Professor Noni Franklin-Tong. Professor Franklin-Tong's research focuses on mechanisms involved in cell-recognition in the Field Poppy, research that has great importance in relation to the future focus on food security. Professor Franklin works with plant breeders to develop new varieties of crops that will be needed to ensure global food security in reaction to challenges posed by population expansion and climate change. This work has led to a number of publications, and I feel particularly fortunate that two of these have been published in Nature. I am also working on a LoLa funded grant which aims to analyse barley. This allows me to work on my own sub-project within the grant objectives; feeding back to post doctoral researchers and my principal investigator, and planning and discussing next steps. During the course of this project I have attended project meetings and presented posters at The British Meiosis conference. I personally value these opportunities and the recognition that being a named author gives me.

Ruth Perry, Research Support and Facilities Manager, College of Life and Environmental Sciences

I'm part of a team of seven who offer a 'one-stop-shop' service for academics interested in working with specific funders. We take them through the process; putting the bid together, working closely with colleagues across the University to make sure there is a consistent level of service, and hopefully reaching the point where the funding is won. Ultimately we aim to take the admin away from the academic, so that they can focus on their high quality research.

I'm incredibly proud of my team, we work together exceptionally well, and have had excellent responses and support from academics across the College. The researchers we get to work with are looking at incredibly impressive themes; from local government issues, to work on Islamophobia. One of the best things about my role is that I get to work with these extraordinary people, to see their passion and get really involved in their work.

When I tell people I work at the University they automatically think students, and yes we have a campus full of students, but that's not all that we do here. Birmingham is an outstanding centre for research; this is after all part of what brings our students here.



Plus it's a great campus, a beautiful place, and the quality and service of what we're offering now is more and more impressive, this is an excellent place to study and a great place to work.

I came to the University as a temp for two weeks in 1994 and never left! I'm impressed that there has been so much development in research and Professional Services. There is real opportunity to change roles and develop – you can have an entire diverse career and never leave the University! The opportunities are there, it's just up to us to take them.

**Karen Hoare, Projects Assistant
College of Social Sciences**



I think that technical staff are some of the University's frontline ambassadors. We help make ideas into reality; hopefully making the research and learning experience enjoyable and worthwhile. I am mainly involved with the manufacture of specialised research equipment, and the day-to-day running of Civil Engineering laboratories. I really enjoy the variety of my work and the fact that I get to meet such diverse and interesting people. For example I'm currently working with students from Africa, Mexico, and China on different research projects. Helping to see their projects through from start to successful completion is one of the best parts of my job.

I work in the Wind Engineering area, and have recently completed construction of a large wind tunnel which, along with my usual workload, has taken three years to complete. The tunnel has 49 fans, is 16 metres long and can develop up to 15 metres per second wind speed. We have already received a range of requests for researchers to use the tunnel for everything from testing cycle resistance, to wind effects on oats during the summer.

I came from an Engineering background, having completed a Tool Making apprenticeship, and can still remember the first task I was given on arriving in the Department. It was the construction of two mechanical grabs to retrieve samples from the sea bed, for the then active tidal research water group. An aspect of my job is building relationships with researchers, and working projects up from often spur of the moment bursts of inspiration. One of the more memorable projects I was given was drawn on a paper dinner plate; but we still worked together to deliver a successful piece of work!

Michael Vanderstam, Technical Manager School of Civil Engineering

The Technology Hub is a long term strategy for the University and Medical School that brings our 'state-of-the-art', critically important and often very expensive equipment together into a single core facility. This will ensure that equipment is widely available to all researchers and that it is properly maintained and serviced. The ultimate aim is to strengthen our grant applications by demonstrating to our funders that our equipment is well looked after and extensively used and that it is worth investing in the University of Birmingham. I enjoyed the challenge of setting up the Hub; taking something from a seed of an idea and helping to turn it into something successful that makes a difference across the College and beyond. Seeing it develop into a more campus wide initiative makes me and the Hub team feel very proud.

The system not only offers a comprehensive equipment booking system but also provides training to ensure that users get the best out of equipment. We can clearly display the value of equipment and that puts us in a position of strength, when completing

My role is very much about working with academics on funding applications. It's about building relationships, and getting to know colleagues; learning about their research and helping them to achieve their goals. I work in a fairly small team, and we work incredibly well together. Every day is different, and I love the opportunities this gives me to learn about the range of research across the College. For example I can go from reading an application about mandates and nation states in the Middle East, to another for funding an exhibition on Birmingham surrealists! We also get to collaborate with colleagues across the University, and I'm currently working with the Cultural Team and Graduate School on a bid to help postgraduate students gain experience of public engagement in the Culture sector.

A really enjoyable part of my job is that I can be quite creative in developing impact for applications for external funding. I recently worked quite closely with Dr Francesca Carnevali on an application to ESRC for a project called 'Made in Britain' that looked historically at products made in Britain, from manufacture to marketing,



funding and grant applications. We also run the 'Technology Hub Lunch Club' with a wide range of internal and external speakers. This is a great way to look at opportunities for collaboration or new ways of using equipment.

I joined the University in the 1980s, working in the Anatomy Department looking at apoptosis and cell death. I've had an incredibly varied view of the University both within and outside the lab, which has definitely helped in my work across the range of equipment we have in the Technology Hub.

Dale Taylor, Technology Hub Manager College of Medical and Dental Sciences

and the whole process in between. We worked with the project team to make the most of contacts in the heritage sector, and were able to involve loads of local museums and collections in the project. If the project is funded, and we are hopeful it will be, this will be a truly collaborative project with the heritage partners benefitting greatly from sustained research into their collections. This example of outreach and external working is another way that we can help academics to build contacts and fill a skills gap. It makes for a true partnership where all parties can get something concrete and beneficial out of the research.

I studied at Birmingham both as an undergraduate and postgraduate. It may sound trite but I love the thought that, even if in a small way, I am putting something back into a university that gave me so many opportunities and helped me believe in my own abilities. I am glad to be able to do something for the academic community that helped me throughout my studies.

Sally Baggott, Research Facilitator College of Arts and Law



Zoe Schnepf... ‘Green Chemistry’

The University is delighted to welcome the arrival of the first of our Birmingham Fellows. These post-doctoral researchers, recruited from around the world, have become an integral part of the University. Fellow **Dr Zoe Schnepf** tells us more about her work on projects that could transform the world’s energy production.

‘Global warming aside, we have to find alternative fuels to ensure our long-term future. There are arguments as to the timescale, but it has to happen eventually.’ So says Dr Zoe Schnepf, a specialist in ‘green chemistry’, who is working on research projects that have the potential to transform the world’s energy production to make it sustainable in the long-term.

‘Given the astonishing fact that enough energy from sunlight strikes the Earth in one hour to provide all the energy needed for human activity in a year, it’s not surprising that governments all over the world now consider the harvesting of solar energy to be a priority,’ says Zoe. There are several ways to do this, the most well-known being the direct conversion of sunlight into electricity. However, sunlight is not constant, so to ensure a reliable national power supply, an energy storage system is required.

A more reliable, sustainable approach is to use solar energy to generate a fuel; hydrogen; in much the same way that plants use sunlight to convert carbon dioxide and water into energy-rich carbohydrates, known as photosynthesis. The idea is to harvest hydrogen by splitting water in a type of ‘artificial photosynthesis’ (AP).

‘There’s a lot of research on AP going on at the moment,’ explains Zoe. ‘Plants use sunlight to make glucose and starch, so what we’re interested in is a similar process, but using sunlight to split water in order to make hydrogen and oxygen. The only waste product is water.’ The process of splitting water using sunlight has been known to be possible for a long time.

The biggest challenge is to find a material to do it that is efficient, robust and cheap.

‘A material used by a lot of people who are researching AP is platinum, because water splitting, just like photosynthesis, requires the transfer of electrons to and from various systems. In a plant, and also in the human body, there is a lot of electron transfer going on. Platinum is very good at this transportation.’ Platinum is, however, also extremely expensive; and its extraction is environmentally damaging.

‘I’m focusing on materials that work just as well as platinum at electron transfer, but are made from much cheaper elements that are more abundant,’ says Zoe. ‘One of the main ones is making iron-based materials. Iron is hugely available, it’s used on a massive scale in the steel industry, so in terms of a resource, it’s brilliant.’

‘There are other people working on iron-based materials for various applications, but there aren’t many applying them to AP. The unique side of what I do is to focus on nanochemistry. We generate very efficient electron-transfer by focusing on the very small-scale structure of these iron-based materials. Not only that, but we are also using some really simple chemistry and cheap resources to do it.’

Zoe’s goal is to find a material that is not only cheap but also sustainable, simple and safe, and uses minimal energy. She has long been interested in ‘Green Chemistry’ and particularly in sustainable routes to nanomaterials. Her particular focus is the use of readily-available biological resources such as wood or seaweed.

Zoe is enjoying the opportunity to continue her research as a Birmingham Fellow. ‘I was attracted to the Birmingham Fellowship scheme because it’s long-term, most positions in academia are very temporary, and having travelled the world a bit, the idea of staying in one place was very appealing’ says Zoe. ‘I was also very impressed with research facilities here and also the fact that there are genuinely strong links between departments. It’s really special.’

To find out more about the ground breaking and inspirational research being carried out by Birmingham Fellows read the latest edition of the University’s Original magazine available at Aston Webb reception or on request by emailing internalcommunications@contacts.birmingham.ac.uk.

MAKING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC AND MUCH MORE!

Sarah Belfield meets members of the University's Music Department to learn more about recent research projects and developments.

Ranked joint second in the country in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, the Birmingham Music Department continues to produce world-leading, influential research which is reflected in the global respect in which the department is held. This year is particularly momentous with the opening of the Bramall Music Building, which provides state of the art facilities to encompass all of the department's needs.

With a research community of around 10 staff and 45 research students, led by Professor Andrew Kirkman, the department works on various research projects.

The Centre for Early Music Performance and Research (CEMPR) is one of the few centres of its kind in Europe where the highest professional level of performance and academic research in early music are brought together. In addition, the Centre for Composition and Associated Studies (COMPASS) hosts a number of ongoing research projects with focus on multichannel spatialisation and sound diffusion. Recent research includes:

- **Performance practice work on extended cello techniques**
- **A new viola-based control interface for sound synthesis**
- **Development of software for the control of large-scale multichannel electroacoustic presentation systems**
- **Ongoing contributions to the SuperCollider computer music language**

The Bramall Music Building opening festival also marks the 30th anniversary of BEAST (Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre). Since its first appearance in the Elgar Concert Room in December 1982, BEAST's sound system has grown from 10 channels of loudspeakers to almost 100, and has performed extensively in the UK and across Europe – including at London's South Bank Centre, The Royal Dutch Conservatory, and the Sound Around Festival in Copenhagen. It received high acclaim as the concert sound system at the 1990 International Computer Music Conference in Glasgow, and was an important contributor to both Sounds Like Birmingham – UK City of Music 1992, and Birmingham's Towards the Millennium Festival. BEAST's own promotions have included ten years of the Barber Festival of Contemporary Music, and events at the Midlands Arts Centre and Crescent Theatre.

The move to the Bramall offers the opportunity not only to work in a space designed with BEAST's special requirements in mind, but also to have a more readily accessible auditorium to experiment with the deployment of sound in space. According to BEAST's Founder and Director, Professor Jonty Harrison, *'Having the time to try things out, to make adjustments to take maximum advantage of the sonic possibilities of a performance space, is always a problem. Large spaces are expensive to hire, and installation,*

rehearsals and concert days are always rushed. In our new home we have the chance to experiment and fine tune the system, enabling us to present acousmatic electroacoustic music in a truly immersive and spectacularly clear sonic environment.'

In addition to the exciting new Bramall facilities, the University has also extended the already close collaboration with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) through the appointment of Simon Halsey as Professor and Director of Choral Activities. Simon has been the Chorus Director of the CBSO for over thirty years and last year published a book in Germany on the subject of choral conducting. *Vom Konzept zum Konzert* has proved to be an outstanding hit in the choral community. Simon is excited to have the chance *'to get the University of Birmingham singing'* as he explains that *'choir music has been found to have huge medical and educational benefits and now bringing broken communities together to sing is turning out to be hugely beneficial.'* The collaboration has also brought in players from the CBSO, and the Orchestra of Birmingham Royal Ballet, to work with students as coaches and section leaders. This combined with the appointment of Daniele Rosina as Director of Orchestral Studies has added a new level of professionalism to orchestral performance at the University.



These are some highlights of the events coming up across the University in the New Year, to find out more visit birmingham.ac.uk/oncampus.index.aspx

Date for the diary

Vice-Chancellor's Lecture Series: Sir Christopher Meyer

Wednesday 20 February, 6.00–7.30pm,
Birmingham Business School

Sir Christopher Meyer is former British Ambassador to the United States and Germany and former Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission. He is author of *DC Confidential* and *Getting Our Way* and is a regular commentator, broadcaster and documentary maker for television and radio. Sir Meyer will deliver the first in the VC Lecture Series for 2013, titled 'The Lessons of History'.

BRAMALL MUSIC BUILDING

Jazzlines presents...

Mike Williams Quartet

Thursday 10 January, 5pm
Foyer, Bramall Music Building

Birmingham Conservatoire jazz tutor Saxophonist Mike Williams lead his quartet featuring some of the UK's most interesting players including Phil Robson on guitar, Percy Pursglove on bass and James Maddren on drums.

Urban Folk Fox presents...

The Folk Sessions

Thursday 17 January, 5pm
Foyer, Bramall Music Building

Urban Fox Folk promotes contemporary British folk music that embraces urban styles and influences from around the world to reflect the multi-cultural, vibrant Britain we live in today. Join them for free folk sessions in the Bramall Foyer.

Date for the diary

Vice-Chancellor's Open Forum

Tuesday 26 February, 12.30–1.30pm
Great Hall, Aston Webb Building

Join the Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood, for his first Open Forum of 2013. Further details will be circulated shortly to all staff.

Birmingham Professional Forum

Friday 8 February, 11am–12noon
Great Hall, Aston Webb Building

The Birmingham Professional Forum is a termly event for all administrative, support and technical staff based across the University, led by the Registrar and Secretary, Lee Sanders. The Forum includes presentations on topical subjects for the University and there is also an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the event. You can do this in advance by emailing internalcomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk or on the day. Further details and updates will be available shortly at intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/events/bpf.aspx



Active Lifestyle and Try Sport

Throughout the year staff and students can buy Active Lifestyle vouchers and Try Sport courses. If your voucher is expiring, or your Try Sport course is coming to an end, why not look at other options and try something different! Or, if you have not yet experienced these programmes, now is the time to start – for free!

Monday 7 January 2013 is the beginning of the **Free Class/Course Week**. Anyone can book onto these sessions and experience new ways to exercise or develop skills. All you have to do is log onto the website and book onto whichever sessions take your fancy. For further details or to book visit sport.bham.ac.uk/alp

THE
BARBER
INSTITUTE OF
FINE ARTS



**PORTRAIT OF A LADY:
THE LIFE AND PASSIONS
OF LADY BARBER**

14 Dec 2012–24 Feb 2013

This exhibition focuses on Lady Barber's life, and collections. A significant part of these have passed to the Barber, including a group of portraits of Lady Barber by her favoured artist, Nestor Cambier. Outstanding but rarely seen textiles and lace will also be featured. The lace collection is the starting point for mixed-media textile artist Jacqueline Lawrence's series of works in 'Inspired by Lace' which runs alongside this exhibition.

**IN FRONT OF NATURE:
THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPES
OF THOMAS FEARNLEY**

Until 27 January 2013

Landscapes featuring a breathtaking range of Europe's varied and beautiful scenery feature in this dazzling exhibition – the UK's first show focusing solely on the work of one of Scandinavia's most important painters, Thomas Fearnley. This exhibition includes iconic large landscape paintings, oil sketches and drawings from major galleries in the UK and abroad, including prestigious loans from Oslo's National Museum, the National Gallery, London and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

**BARBER EVENING
CONCERTS**

**ALINA IBRAGIMOVA AND
CEDRIC TIBERGHIE**

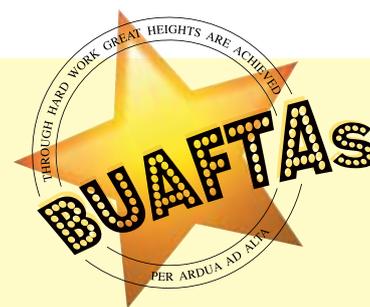
Wednesday 30 January, 7.30pm
Barber Concert Hall

Following their first appearance at the Barber in 2010, Alina Ibragimova and Cedric Tiberghien return with an all-Schubert programme featuring two song arrangements, *Nacht und Träume* and *Sei mir gegrüsst!*, alongside three virtuosic concert works for violin and piano. **Admission: £12, £3 students**

JERUSALEM QUARTET

Wednesday 13 February, 7.30pm
Barber Concert Hall

Composers have traditionally relied on patrons to commission their works, and promote their performances. The importance of patronage in music is illustrated by this programme. Mozart's Quartet in B flat, was written for King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, while Shostakovich's quartet is dedicated to Dmitry Tsyganov. Beethoven also dedicated his first set of quartets to a patron. **Admission: £12, £3 students**



BUAFTAs 2013

Thank you to all those who nominated for BUAFTAs 2013, and congratulations to all of our shortlisted nominees. Winners will be announced at the gala dinner on 8 February 2013.

Thank you to BUAFTA Champions who worked hard to get their teams nominating, and are selling raffle tickets for this year's charity BUAFTA raffle. Tickets are available to buy for £1 each, and there are some fantastic prizes available including:

- Pair of return Eurostar tickets to Brussels, Paris, or Lille
- Contract free iPhone 5
- Pair of tickets to a concert at Town Hall Symphony Hall
- £100 cash
- An LG 23" LCD TV
- A pair of tickets to a show at the Bramall Music Building, with drinks on arrival and during the interval

All proceeds from the raffle will go to support our chosen charity, Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies (BCAT). You can purchase tickets from your local BUAFTA Champion, and the draw will take place at the dinner on Friday 8 February 2013.

Winners will also be listed on BUAFTA pages at intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/university/BUAFTAs.

Writers' network

Are you a budding author? A group of staff are looking to start a lunch time writers' circle. The first goal will be working on entries for the West Midlands Short story competition, generating ideas and providing feedback/critique in a friendly environment. For those who already have projects on the go, we can help to encourage and support during the writing process. We also hope to set up an online group for those not able to attend in person. If you are interested in joining the group, please email either Jess Holloway Swift, j.s.hollowayswift@bham.ac.uk or Claire Browne c.k.browne@bham.ac.uk

VenueBirmingham are offering a great special offer for colleagues attending the BUAFTA awards, at £35 for a single room (room only). Visit venuebirmingham.com/bedandbreakfast and use the promotion code of BUAFTA for the date of Friday 8 February 2013 to get the special rate.

Dr Anna Phillips, Reader in Behavioural Medicine... in my own words



My research looks at ageing and how psychological factors like stress are related to the immune and cardiovascular systems, and disease. I'm studying how factors like bereavement, caregiving stress, and depression affect people's health, and also at individuals' responses to stress. There's a theory called the reactivity hypothesis that suggests if you usually have exaggerated cardiovascular responses to stress you will be at greater future risk of heart disease. Now we're showing that if you have a blunted stress response, that is not a beneficial physiological reaction either, and is associated with future indices of ill health or risk such as depression, obesity, and addiction. If we can identify individuals with blunted responses we can highlight who might be at risk of poorer health in the future and try to do something about it. I teach Behavioural Medicine which examines how factors like stress affect health via our physiology and my research fits in very nicely with that. Being a Psychologist, I also do some teaching on Statistics. My teaching and research definitely work together, although fitting it all in can be a challenge!

Working in HE wasn't what I initially intended to do, I wanted to be a Clinical Psychologist, particularly to work with adults, when I finished my first degree I worked as a psychology assistant. I won't tell you where, but it wasn't what I expected! I wasn't getting to do any psychology work and that was very frustrating. I then chose to be a research assistant for the NHS and had a crazy few years where I got married and moved to Birmingham, whilst studying in Staffordshire for my MSc in Health Psychology, and working in a job based in Blackpool and Lancaster!

I studied at Birmingham twice, as an undergraduate in Psychology, and then to do my PhD in Sportex on stress and response to vaccination. The campus has come a long way and I think the opportunities with the new Sportex facilities are great. I loved being a student here because you had your own campus community but were still within reach of the city centre.

I attended an alumni dinner a while ago where undergraduates could discuss career options, and it's great to go from being a student myself to being staff going to black tie events in the Great Hall and Staff House. It's also such a beautiful campus, we often invite external people we're working with to come onto campus and it's just amazing to see their reaction.

My advice for early career researchers would be

to do as much as you can, it's important to show that you can deliver and are reliable. Don't be all talk about how wonderful you are but no action! I've never done extra stuff because I want to get promoted, but I like to achieve a lot for myself and that eventually gets noticed. I'm very driven, but that's not the same as being ambitious, for me it's more about a work ethic. Some people have a bad perception of extra activities like interacting with the press and 'impact' but it's something I've always said yes to, such as the AgeWell days that we run for older adults, which we initially got grant funding to support. These are a great way to engage with research participants and to really talk to the people involved in our research. It lets them have more of a say in the process, and it helps academics to get a different perspective.

I know that impact will be important to the REF, but I think we should be doing that kind of activity anyway. That's why I agreed to the University Heroes campaign because it's important to get our meaningful research out there. It was a bizarre experience; my cousins kept contacting me saying 'oh we've seen you on the tube again' and there was a moment when I was walking to a grant meeting and saw a massive billboard with me at the front. However, it's nice to see that the great research happening at Birmingham is getting into the public domain, and to show that academics don't just sit in offices typing away, we're doing interesting work that does affect people's lives.

There are some people who never sign up to extra initiatives unless they absolutely have to, and never communicate what they're doing because they think it will damage the time they have to do the 'core' part of their job, or their reputation. I think that if people have got capacity to say yes to things they should (although my problem is perhaps not saying 'no' enough!) as it gives you a different perspective and opportunities. I wouldn't have been in Mexico last summer seeing how students at Tec de Monterrey worked to better their local community if I hadn't agreed to run a Universitas 21 workshop in Birmingham last year and joined the University U21 committee.

I strongly believe that you shouldn't just do your job to the guidelines you're being evaluated against but do more, not for recognition but for the sheer experience of it. Doing new things makes the academic role even more rewarding and fun. You don't always want to be in the office or in the lab – get out there! **;**