



December/January 2019



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

A Helping Hand

Vice-Chancellor's *view*



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood

When I was running the Higher Education Funding Council I visited almost every university in England. Arriving at a university was always an interesting experience. In many cases I was warmly welcomed and the organisation of the visit was impeccable. Given that I was then responsible for £8.1 billion of university funding, you might think that this was sensible!

YOUR BUZZ

Next edition 7 February
Copy deadline 11 January

Contact us
university-buzz@bham.ac.uk

Buzz online
buzz.bham.ac.uk

Follow us on Twitter
twitter.com/buzzunibham

Find us on Facebook
facebook.com/buzzunibham



Edited by Matthew Collins
internalcomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Your details

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

Views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the University or a statement of University policy. All submissions may be subject to editing. The Editor's decision is final.

Front cover image: The Smith family: Mark and Kathryn with sons Kaleb and Alby

There were, however, occasions when I arrived, went to Reception and little seemed to be known about my visit. My arrival seemed to be greeted as an unwelcome irritant. I would be asked to sign a book, and then directed to a (usually uncomfortable) seat in a corner. On one occasion it took more than 25 minutes for someone to come and greet me and take me to the first meeting of my visit.

What was interesting was that the welcome was an excellent barometer of the quality and performance of the university. Almost invariably, where I was warmly and efficiently welcomed the university was a successful institution and those working there took evident pride in their university. Conversely, where the welcome was perfunctory or worse, it often reflected a university which was under-performing and an institution where things were not going well.

These experiences have left me with an enduring sense that first impressions matter. So often in universities, and indeed in life more generally, first encounters create impressions that endure. Positive greetings leave us well-disposed, while chilly greetings are the harbinger of an anything but fruitful relationship.

Talking to visitors, applicants, parents, and members of the public who come to the University, it is clear that I am not alone in thinking that first impressions matter.

I am often told what a difference a warm and helpful greeting at a security gate makes. Many of our visitors speak appreciatively of the way in which they are greeted by receptionists. Applicants are enthused by the student ambassadors and helpers who greet them and facilitate their visits.

We know that teaching and research are at the heart of a university. Without great and committed teaching and intellectually-courageous and transformational research, a university cannot be a great university. Nevertheless, there is so much more that contributes to the reputation and performance of a university. Indeed, everything that happens in a university matters, and the way in which it happens contributes to our reputation.

Just as people comment on the welcome they receive when they visit the University, so they comment with huge enthusiasm on our grounds and gardens, on the way in which our buildings are maintained, the variety and quality of food and catering outlets, and the sense of the campus as a safe and secure environment. For visitors, and for those of us who work in the University, all of this and more contributes to the sense of our being privileged to work in one of the world's great university campuses.

Much the same has been evident in the new Edgbaston Park Hotel and Conference Park. I have now lost count of the number of people who have commented to me on 'this wonderful new facility', on the warmth and professionalism of the welcome and service they have received, and of the inspiration which sits behind the design of the buildings and gardens.

How people do their jobs constantly makes and remakes the University as a lived experience. Many students over the years have had reason to thank a cleaner who noticed that they were struggling and alerted the right people at the right time and in the right way.

BIRMINGHAM GLOBAL

JAPAN

Though perhaps not everyone realises it, the range of skills that a university like ours needs to run is enormous. I am constantly struck in talking to people not only by how good they are at their jobs but by how committed they are to the University. It is this professionalism and this commitment that make the University what it is. If ever anybody doubts this, they should look at the number of awards won by colleagues in HAS, and won against the best not only in our sector but in other sectors too. From outstanding catering, through to our remarkable green transport fleet, we lead not only the sector but set a benchmark well beyond it.

So what we are as a university is what together we make. How we are experienced as a university depends on all of our contributions. How we work together in and for the University is critical to our university's future.

This is not something that just happens from time to time, it happens every day of the year. Indeed, on Christmas Day and on New Year's Day, there will be colleagues in the University because there will be students in residence. In thanking them, I want to thank all of my colleagues for the contribution that you make. As a result, that first impression of the University of Birmingham as a great university where great people work and great students study is an impression that endures.

The two-day event (26–27 November) featured an international symposium on 'Adapting Shakespeare for the Stage Today' and was attended by His Excellency Paul Madden CMG, British Ambassador to Japan, and featured a series of academic workshops and guest lectures across a number of areas of mutual interests.

The collaboration in Shakespeare's studies and performance unite the University's world-renowned Shakespeare Institute and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) with the researchers and theatre practitioners from the Waseda's Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, which is named after Professor Tsubouchi Shoyo; a pioneer in modern Japanese literature and theatre, and well known for translating Shakespeare's complete works into Japanese.

The international symposium on 'Adapting Shakespeare for the Stage

BIRMINGHAM AND JAPAN WORKING CLOSER TOGETHER

A high-profile delegation from the University of Birmingham, led by Professor Robin Mason, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), visited the University's strategic partner, Waseda University in Tokyo – one of Japan's most prestigious universities – for a 'UoB Day at Waseda' event.



Michael Dobson, Kelly Hunter, Tiffany Stern, Augus Jackson (Director of RSC), Robin Mason, Paul Madden (British Ambassador to Japan), Prof Aiji Tanaka (President of Waseda University)

Today' delivered new insights on bringing together stage practice and academic research to stage the Bard's plays – particularly focusing on how Japanese traditional theatre can help better understand Shakespeare.

Robotics is another area that brings the strength from both sides to work together. The Birmingham-Waseda collaboration in Robotics was featured during the UK Foreign Secretary of State's visit to Waseda in June 2017. Potential areas for collaboration include cognitive robotics, computer vision, human-robot interaction and machine learning.

Beyond Shakespeare and Robotics, the collaboration between the two universities will expand across a wide range of other research areas, especially in applied linguistics, environmental sciences, urban studies, creative writing, renewable energy and economics.

University of Birmingham Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) Professor Robin Mason commented:

'The UK is one of Japan's top research partners. It is vitally important for both the University of Birmingham and our country to develop closer engagement with our counterparts in Japan, especially in areas of shared research strength.'

'Our collaboration with Waseda University continues to bear fruit, as there is much common ground between us. The joint symposium on Shakespeare is tremendously exciting in itself, but I look forward to celebrating and progressing our other areas of joint research.'

Life-saving heart starters installed on campus

As part of the University's commitment to provide a safe environment for all, this summer saw the installation of public access automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in four key locations: Estates Maintenance Building (Y6), Poynting Building (R13), University House (O3) and Shackleton Hall in the heart of Vale Village.

Although you may have already seen one of 16 existing AEDs in campus buildings, these new life-savers are highly visible, easy to access and available 24 hours per day.

AEDs maximise the chance of saving someone's life following a sudden cardiac arrest by delivering an electrical shock to restore the heart's natural rhythm. Safe for both trained first aiders and laypersons, they are most effective when used with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) while awaiting the arrival of paramedics.

Colleagues from Workplace Wellbeing and Estates have launched this new initiative in collaboration with external partners including West Midlands Ambulance Service. Aiming to raise awareness among staff and students, a programme of promotional events will



be taking place in the near future and a new intranet resource has been launched. Available resources will include comprehensive guidance on what to do in an emergency situation and how to use an AED effectively.

For further details visit:

www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/firstaid

GRADUATE MANAGEMENT TRAINING SCHEME – APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN!

Did you know that the University has its own Graduate Management Training Scheme?

Committed to attracting the best and brightest employees, the Graduate Management Training Scheme in Professional Services provides high calibre, ambitious graduates with an entry point into the dynamic and stimulating career of higher education management.

Find out more information and how to apply at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/gts

Application deadline: 6 January 2019



BIRMINGHAM PROFESSIONAL FESTIVE FORUM 2018

Thursday 20 December 11.00am–12.30pm Great Hall, Aston Webb Building

Birmingham Professional and BUAFTAs warmly invite you all to join us, in your Christmas jumpers, on Thursday 20 December in the Great Hall for this year's Festive Forum, celebrating another successful year for our university. A selection of seasonal treats, our famous BUAFTA cupcakes and a glass of festive cheer will also be available upon arrival to help you enjoy this celebration at the most wonderful time of the year.

The event, hosted by the Registrar and Secretary Lee Sanders, will showcase the latest developments and updates from across our campus, raise awareness

about how you can help make a difference and culminate in the revealing of the BUAFTAs 2019 shortlisted nominees.

You will also hear more about this year's BUAFTA appeal supporting Birmingham academics leading the fight against the growth of anti-bacterial and anti-microbial resistance. Tickets will be available on the day from the BUAFTAs Champions, so please remember to bring some change with you to the event.

We look forward to welcoming you!



Research [IN FOCUS]

REF2021 IMPACT

Celebrated at the recent Outstanding Impact Awards ceremony, *Buzz* takes a closer look at two Impact case studies that have real-life impact for people at home and abroad.

Revolutionary eye drops

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) prevalence is increasing dramatically as the population ages, and it is estimated that by 2020 there will be about 200 million people worldwide with the condition. In the UK alone, there are over 500,000 people with late-stage AMD.

AMD is currently treated by injections of sight-saving drugs into the eye, which must be administered by medical professionals. Now, in a huge leap forward for the condition, scientists at the University are one step closer to developing an eye drop that could revolutionise treatment.

Dr Felicity de Cogan and her team from the Institute of Microbiology and Infection have invented a method of delivering these otherwise-injected drugs as eye drops, which, as studies in rats, rabbits and pigs have demonstrated, can deliver a therapeutically effective amount of the drugs to the retina (the back of the eye) via a cell-penetrating peptide.

The research has attracted commercial investment from US-based company, Macregen, which now owns the pending patents. A team of Birmingham researchers is working with the company to develop a novel range of therapies for AMD and other eye diseases, with clinical trials for the eye drops expected to begin as early as spring 2019.

Dr Felicity de Cogan said: *'From the outset, we realised that delivering drugs through eye drops would mean that patients can administer their treatment themselves, and this would be less costly, save time for patients and healthcare providers, and reduce the potential complications that can arise from injections.'*

'Now we have shown that the eye drops work in the larger mammalian eye, and we welcome the commercial investment and expertise from Macregen so we can deliver a structured research and development programme that should bring concrete benefits to people with AMD and eye diseases.'

Felicity's research has the potential to completely disrupt the market, which is currently valued at \$26 billion annually.

Financial inclusion

The Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM)'s research, led by Professor Karen Rowlingson, has had a significant impact on financial inclusion in the UK, particularly in relation to responsible lending. Karen's research has led to real, measurable benefits for a very large group of low-income consumers.

Karen's research has influenced reforms which have resulted in high-cost, short-term credit (HCSTC) becoming less expensive to borrow – the cost of a typical loan fell from over £100 in 2014 to around £60 in 2015, saving 760,000 low-income borrowers a total of £150 million per year. Furthermore, fewer consumers are

experiencing debt problems – StepChange Debt Charity saw a 30 per cent drop in clients with HCSTC debt problems from 2013–16, while Citizens Advice saw a 60 per cent drop after the 2014–15 reforms.

Karen's research explored the nature of 'responsible' lending in the UK and identified ways to increase it. It found that HCSTC had negative consequences for many borrowers and needed reforming, including a price cap. However, contrary to the picture presented by media and campaigners, various aspects of HCSTC actually benefitted some customers, given the situations they were in.

The research also showed that some borrowers faced very similar problems with mainstream credit such as overdrafts. Drawing on stakeholder engagement and in-depth interviews with consumers for the Arts and Humanities Research Council, CHASM submitted a 15-page response to the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) consultation on a price cap for payday lending, arguing for reforms to reduce the cost of credit and other negative aspects of this form of borrowing – but argued against reforms that might have removed this form of credit from the market entirely. The subsequent FCA reforms followed this path and there is strong evidence that this has had very beneficial effects. In 2014, the FCA introduced rules requiring adequate affordability assessments allowing for a maximum of two rollovers of the loan amount, and requiring a financial warning to be included in payday advertisements.

In January 2015, the government went further by introducing a cap on the initial cost of credit at 0.8 per cent per day, with an annualised percentage rate of 1,270 per cent; default fees were also limited to £15 and default interest could not exceed 0.8 per cent per day. A 100 per cent repayment cap also meant that borrowers would never have to repay more than double the amount they borrowed.

Professor Rowlingson has also recently published the 2018 Financial Inclusion Report (www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/social-policy/chasm/news/2018/financial-inclusion-annual-monitoring-briefing-paper.aspx), which identifies, for example, that net credit card lending to individuals is now growing at a rate of about ten per cent per year. Findings also show that people were saving less of their incomes in 2017 than at any time in the past 20 years.

Building on the policy work completed so far, Karen spoke at September's Labour Party Conference in Liverpool to discuss how we can win the campaign to end high-cost credit. Karen's talk sparked important conversation about the increase in personal borrowing in the UK. Karen is also a Member of Michael Sheen's recent social venture, the End High Cost Credit Alliance, which campaigns for a fairer credit system through regulation, policy and education.

transforming OUR campus

Collaborative Teaching Laboratory welcomes its first students

On 1 October, the newly completed Collaborative Teaching Laboratory (CTL) welcomed its first students. The new development includes three laboratories and flexible learning and study spaces for students, as well as a café.



Students arrive at CTL

Teaching and Learning Building column completion

A ceremony to celebrate the first phase of building the Teaching and Learning Building took place in the autumn, marking the completion of the structural columns. Students joined with staff, architects Willmott Dixon Construction representatives and the Vice-Chancellor to highlight the occasion. The Vice-Chancellor was joined by an engineering student, as he verified the column was complete, using a traditional plumb-bob.

The building, due for completion in early 2020, is on schedule, and will provide significantly more teaching areas, including two new lecture theatres and many seminar rooms, along with additional flexible study space for students.

A new blog has been created to chart progress of the Teaching and Learning Building at www.uobtandlbuilding.com



Teaching and Learning column completion

Old Gym completion

The Old Gym refurbishment is now complete. The building houses new teaching spaces including an 80-seater tiered lecture theatre, two 32-seater seminar rooms, which can be joined together, as well as two larger teaching rooms. These spaces will be timetabled from January, but are bookable later on this term.

There are also 18 PCs in small clusters for student use, along with desks and spaces for informal study.

In addition, there are two new floors of office spaces, in which colleagues from LES and HEFi will reside. This will be the new home for the LES student hub.



The Old Gym

School of Engineering breaks ground



School of Engineering ground breaking

Work is now underway opposite the CTL on the new School of Engineering building. Earlier in the Autumn Term, a groundbreaking ceremony was held with construction partners Willmott Dixon. Foundation work is currently being carried out, with the building due for completion in 2020.

As well as providing a single home for many different engineering disciplines, the new School of Engineering will sit alongside a world-class centre of excellence in rail in partnership with industry, focusing on digital systems. Funded as part of the newly created **UK Railway Research and Innovation Network (UKRRIN)**, it will focus on railway control and simulation, data integration and cybersecurity, condition monitoring and sensing, and improved methods for technology introduction. This builds on existing strength in rail research.



Crest installation

Crests find a new home

The University crests, which originally belonged at the top of the old Main Library, have been reintroduced to the Green Heart. They were carefully restored after they were removed from their old home, and were painted sympathetically in situ to bring out their features.

The crests now reside in a focal point on the Green Heart, immediately below where they were, and facing Old Joe and the Aston Webb Building. This is one of the last structural activities in the Green Heart before its completion by January 2019.

HOW WILL YOU TAKE PART IN THE GREEN HEART FESTIVAL?

In June 2019, we will kick off a celebratory festival, marking the completion of the Green Heart once it has bloomed into life. It will begin with a weekend-long event on campus, which will feature performances and lots of activities for a wide variety of audiences on the 8 and 9 June 2019. This will be followed by a year-long programme of activities that will be organised by staff, students and partners.

Split into four seasons and themes, the festival will be an opportunity to promote research and education from across the institution:

- Summer–June–August 2019 – Celebration
- Autumn–September–November 2019 – Change
- Winter–December 2019–February 2020 – Illumination
- Spring–March–May 2020 – Hope

Find out how to put your event forward for inclusion, and much more, by visiting www.birmingham.ac.uk/greenheartfestival or email greenheart@contacts.bham.ac.uk

REMEMBERING THE GREAT WAR

On 12 August 1914, the University opened its doors as a hospital to treat the casualties of the First World War, and received its first convoy of patients from Moor Street Station shortly after. Known as the First Southern Regional Hospital, 65,165 men were treated on the campus. The Great Hall and other buildings around Chancellor's Court were modified to house a number of operating theatres and provide 800 bed spaces – some of the beds were even set up in marquees outside.

This November, four years of commemoration of the First World War's centenary reached a climax with a series of national and worldwide events. At the University on the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, over 350 staff, students and members of the local community attended a special evening of music, readings and drama to remember the Great War.

As part of this remembrance, the event brought to life the accounts of those involved in the war effort, revealing individual perspectives as the news of the Armistice broke.

Music

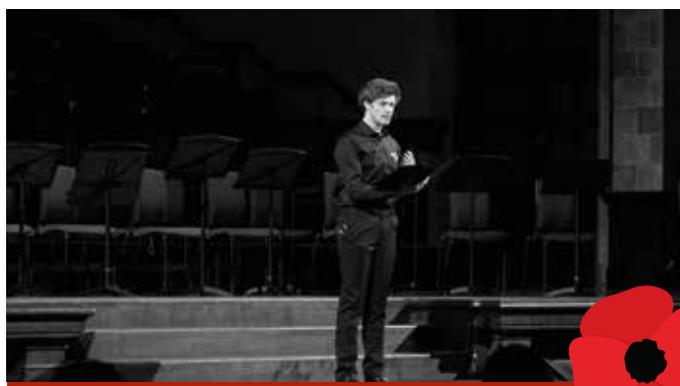
The evening began with a new work by recent PhD composer Daniel Fardon, a saxophone piece – taking inspiration from the infantry bugle call used to commemorate the dead – *the Last Post*.



Destined to be performed in large spaces like churches, cathedrals and the open air - Messiaen's *Et Exspecto* concluded the evening. Messiaen's 1964 work for wind orchestra was commissioned by André Malraux, the then Minister of Cultural Affairs under Charles de Gaulle, as a sacred work to commemorate the dead of the two World Wars.

Readings

Readings taken from poems, prose and a selection of letters and other materials from the archives included Wilfred Owen's '*Anthem for Doomed Youth*', May Wedderburn Cannan's '*The Armistice*' and Siegfried Sassoon's '*On Passing the New Menin Gate*'.



Exhibition

Research and Cultural Collections presented a display of objects that portrayed the University of Birmingham's role during the First World War as well as the experiences of medical staff, soldiers and families who had to face its devastating consequences. These emotive stories demonstrated how the people of Birmingham and beyond dealt with the challenges of war and how they reacted in the face of adversity.



With this, the Cadbury Research Centre displayed a series of photographs which clearly depict the casualties of war and the role our building once had. 'Southern Cross Hospital' facilitated a specialist facial injury unit and, being the only one in the country at this time, the unit treated some 2,500 soldiers with jaw injuries.

All proceeds from tickets, over £1,500, were donated to Fisher House UK and The Royal British Legion.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM STRENGTHENS BUSINESS TIES AT THE ANNUAL CBI CONFERENCE



The Business Engagement team from the University of Birmingham was the sole Higher Education Institution sponsoring the annual CBI (Confederation of British Industry) conference, confirming the University's position at the forefront of business partnership. This very high-profile event, with over 1300 senior level industry executives, was a fantastic opportunity for the University to strengthen ties with senior members of the UK business community and showcase its close collaborations across many industrial sectors. It also allowed us a great opportunity to hear first-hand about the skills businesses need in their workforces of tomorrow.

Alongside speeches from Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn discussing their position on Brexit, the key focus of the conference was on Britain's next generation of talent and the impact of technology and trust on future leaders. It was great to hear how businesses are increasingly looking for those who can demonstrate adaptability, resilience, creativity and leadership – skills that we are continually reinforcing for all of our students with our programmes. Speakers, such as Liv Garfield, Chief Executive of Severn Trent and Josh Graff, VP EMEA of LinkedIn, highlighted the changing working landscape and their company's efforts to improve diversity and inclusion.

The University of Birmingham team comprised academics from across CoSS, CAL, EPS and MDS. A well-attended lunch with very senior members of the business community focussed on the use of AI (artificial intelligence) in professional services, led by Professor Lisa Webley and with representation from PVC Tim Softley and DPVC Tariq Ali.

There was great feedback from businesses interested in continuing their discussions with the University from the day. Many were pleased to see a Higher Education Institution that so clearly demonstrated its desire to connect with the business world. Other Higher Education Institutions asked us how we managed to get the space as they wanted to have discussions with industry at the same level!

The University of Birmingham was really seen as a pioneer with its participation in this industry conference. For further information about the Business Engagement team, please follow us on twitter @UoBBWB or contact us at businesssteam@contacts.bham.ac.uk

NEW YEAR – NEW CORE!

NEW CORE, THE UNIVERSITY'S NEW SYSTEM BRINGING ENHANCED FINANCE, HR, PAYROLL AND RESEARCH FUNCTIONALITY FOR ALL STAFF, WILL BE LAUNCHING IN FEBRUARY 2019. WITH JUST A FEW MONTHS TO GO UNTIL 'GO-LIVE', *BUZZ* CAUGHT UP WITH THE NEW CORE TEAM.

Working closely with colleagues across the University, New Core is providing all Academic and Professional Services staff with new online, cloud-based systems for more robust management, tracking and reporting of personal, project and team tasks; from requesting annual leave to reporting on research grant spend. New Core will bring new processes and access across a range of areas including:

Staff recruitment: hiring managers will now be able to review, monitor and lead on hiring of new staff, from advert to arrival, through a single system.

Finance: requisitions, raising employee expenses and financial reporting will all be managed via the new system.

Personal profile: you will be able to view and edit your personal information; including your address, emergency contacts and bank details. Payslips will also be easily accessed via your profile – meaning no more paper payslips!

Research Grant Management: New Core is also implementing Worktribe, a system that will enable full grant management from idea to application and set-up, including contracts.



New Core will bring new functionality and ways of working for all colleagues. The extent of the impact New Core has on you will depend on the level of involvement you currently have in HR, Payroll, Finance and Research activities. However, these key messages summarise the changes and benefits for all staff:

- **Self Service** – all University employees will be able to access, edit and approve more information than ever before for themselves and their teams, such as raising expenses and changing addresses.
- **Defined workflows** – new intuitive processes will make it easier to see the status of your Finance and HR tasks and to report on and streamline activity
- **Role based** – system access will be allocated on a role basis, ensuring that you have functionality and reporting tailored to the tasks and information that you need.
- **From prevention to detection** – self-service elements of the system will empower colleagues to be able to complete and auto-approve more activity than ever. Robust reporting and oversight will also be provided to allow detailed, accurate and real-time auditing and monitoring of actions as needed contracts.

How to get involved!

There are plenty of ways that you can find out more about New Core before February:

- Attend an event – there are regular New Core all-staff and departmental meetings where you can find out more about the system and what it means for you. If you would like to arrange a New Core demonstration in your area, please contact the team at newcore@contacts.bham.ac.uk
- Get involved in Training – a wide range of training materials will be available for all staff including online and printed guides, self-guided tutorials and classroom training. Further details on New Core training are available at www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/newcoretraining
- Ask your local expert – New Core has Super User and Champion Networks with members from all departments across the University. Not sure who your local New Core expert is? Check the New Core intranet for details!



- Check out programme communications – New Core newsletter, blog, videos and departmental updates are already regularly communicated across the University. Colleagues will also be provided with launch guides, checklists and detailed information on what New Core means for them ahead of system launch.

Also look out in your next edition of *Buzz* magazine for a detailed feature on New Core's launch!

Thank you to all colleagues who have been involved in New Core so far; to find out more about the new system, events and how you can get involved; visit www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/newcore or email newcore@contacts.bham.ac.uk.



Reverend Richard Coles *on Happiness*

On November 12, Reverend Richard Coles delivered the 40th annual Baggs Memorial Lecture on the theme of '*Happiness – what it is and how it may be achieved by individuals as well as nations*'.

Reverend Coles is a Church of England priest in the village of Finedon, Northamptonshire. Richard is also known as one half of pop band The Communards. During the 1980s The Communards had three UK Top 10 hits, including the biggest-selling single of 1986, *Don't Leave Me This Way*, making him the only vicar to have ever had a number one single.

Richard is co-presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Saturday Live* and is a regular guest panellist on shows such as *Have I Got News For You* and *QI*. In January 2014, he won the BBC's *Celebrity Mastermind*, and in 2017 he appeared on *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Matt Collins spoke to him before his lecture for the *Friday Afternoon at the Bratby* podcast. A summary of that conversation follows.

On happiness...

I think it's important to make the distinction between the happiness of which the framers of the American constitution talked about – liberty and the pursuit of happiness – and the moments of joy and contentment that come and go that are incidental to the dramas of life.

When I think about my own happiness – truthfully – I felt most happy during the summer of 1990 on the island of Ibiza, not only because I was having a lovely time, but because I was taking so much ecstasy.

The state of my life at that time was pretty turbulent – the 80s in particular; the best of times with the success of The Communards, and the worst of times with HIV and Aids. As Kierkegaard observed, 'life is lived forward but understood backwards'

– at the time you may not be conscious that you're particularly happy or sad, but, in retrospect, you look back with more clarity.

The art of living involves a forgetfulness; not trying to hold on to moments which are passing in their nature. Now is pretty good, but I think that's to do with contentment founded on my religious faith. Of course, these days I've got age to contend with...

On balancing holy duties with celebrity status...

It's really difficult, but it's set up to work. I'm a part-time vicar, but both jobs are unpredictable and can make unmeetable claims on your energy and attention. I try to work in a way where one is continuous with the other – though it is hard to see what my pasodoble had to do with the salvation of humankind, but that was a longshot!

I'm not always sure if people connect with me as a vicar or a 'celebrity', and sometimes they weirdly overlap – the other day someone asked me for a selfie at a funeral. At another funeral, whilst we were waiting for the hearse to arrive, a dark-suited mourner very solemnly came up to me, gripped me by the arm, and said: 'you're a terrible dancer.' He was right, of course.

On modern life and the UK's happiness...

I like to think modern living has enriched people's lives. Indeed, one of the ways that you can enrich yourself and the world is by going out and about, if that option is available to you. But then, plenty of people live life in its fullness very modestly – I think of Jane Austen, rarely shifting from the parsonages or terraces of Bath or Hampshire, yet there didn't seem

to be anything in her life that lacked circumspection.

The Finns, Norwegians and Swedes regularly score high on indexes of happiness. Of course, they're very good at social benefits, and I also suspect it's to do with their societies being more or less at peace with themselves – unlike ours, which, never more so in my memory, is very fractious and warring. There's a buccaneering rapaciousness about the pursuit of power, prestige and achievement in Anglo-American culture (broad brush strokes here!) that can make life quite bumpy and also requires that many lose so that some succeed... I'm not sure it produces a great wealth of human happiness.

On spreading happiness...

Always assume the best intentions of others and try to live lives that are founded on trust. You can't control anybody else's capacity for trust, but you can do something about your own. It's a commitment to a way of living that encourages a natural goodness of people. There are all sorts of reasons why you might be inclined to pessimism, or worse, to cynicism, but a certain positive attitude, and trust to live in the expectation of something better, is good.

"You're a terrible dancer"

We interviewed Reverend Coles before his lecture. Find out about Ibiza, Kierkegaard's wisdom, founding an atheist society and being asked for a selfie at a funeral in our FATBY podcast: www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-gwdey-9fb553

RESEARCH AND CULTURAL COLLECTIONS 2018–19

Artists in Residence

The Cultural Engagement team is delighted to introduce the new Artists in Residence for 2018–19, General Public and Sophie Huckfield. The Artist in Residence scheme invites artists to undertake a residency in order to develop new work exploring and responding to academic research as well as the University's superb cultural assets. Based in a studio on campus, the Artists in Residence work alongside the University's curators and researchers, forging new interdisciplinary relationships and delivering a range of cultural activity to staff, students and the public. Currently in the early stages of their residency, the artists will develop their projects over the coming academic year and are actively seeking creative and collaborative opportunities in order to explore new ideas.

General Public

General Public is the collaborative platform of artists Elizabeth Rowe and Chris Poolman. They devise large-scale public art projects that incorporate elements

of fiction, myth-making, local history re-invention and heritage rebooting. Often this process involves re-working or inverting an established model or institutional structure.

Previous projects have included a re-interpretation of the biennale concept in inner-city Birmingham in Balsall Heath, a science fiction-themed light festival exploring the politics of regeneration in Longbridge, a community competition resulting in 4,000 new coins for Handsworth and a touring exhibition utilising migratory movements of hop-pickers as the conceptual basis for a tour in The Hop Project. In 2018, they conceived and produced *The Endless Village*, an apocalyptic sitcom that investigates life in an imagined post-Brexit Britain of the future.

General Public plan to use their residency at the University of Birmingham to research and develop their practice through The Pomology Project. This project hopes to explore and celebrate



contemporary UK diversity through British orchard traditions and customs. What might be termed 'traditional' English fruits are actually descended from Central Asian ancestors and the project uses this analogy to look at how the UK is shaped by difference. As with previous projects, it will bring together different voices in a multi-layered approach by taking a distinctly 'heritage' subject and attempting to 're-boot' it within a contemporary socio-political context.

<http://generalpublic.org.uk/>



Sophie Huckfield

Sophie Huckfield's practice traces the intersection between art, craft and engineering. She employs traditional and experimental modes of production in order to create sculpture and functional objects. Exploring our relationship to materials and objects, specifically tools, machines and technologies, Huckfield seeks to emphasise and materialise the physical matter we hold in our hands, blurring the boundaries between the commodity of objects and the tools used to produce them.

Using a variety of modes of production, Huckfield explores the relationship between people and technologies, the makers and their objects. This has included the Crafts Council's 'Make Your Future' project, connecting traditional craft with digital technologies through a series of school workshops where attendees created their own 'makers mark' in pewter using ancient techniques of sand casting.



Huckfield is currently working on the Ambience Factory, a collaborative project utilising a faux corporate mindfulness business, whose remit is to ease its clients' work anxiety through 'stress relieving' digital technologies. Working with academics from the University's Contemporary Philosophy of Technology Research Group, this satirical project explores the adoption of workplace well-being programmes and the benefits of cross-disciplinary practices between the arts, academia and technology.

Alongside her art practice Huckfield was previously an Engineering Technician in the Physics Workshop for the School of Physics and Astronomy.

The Physics Workshop fabricates the unique parts and tools required to power the groundbreaking technologies at the heart of the University's world-renowned scientific experiments in the realm of physics. During her residency, Huckfield will explore the unofficial archives of the Physics Workshop, which document the history of the workshop and the technicians who work on campus. She will also draw inspiration from objects and sculptures from the Research and Cultural Collections, with a particular focus on the works of Eduardo Paolozzi, one of the leading proponents of British Pop Art whose work combines the influences of surrealism, popular culture and mechanistic forms. Through the creation of sculpture, texts and public workshops, Huckfield will

consider the fundamental relationship between the maker and the object they create.

<http://www.sophiehuckfield.com/>

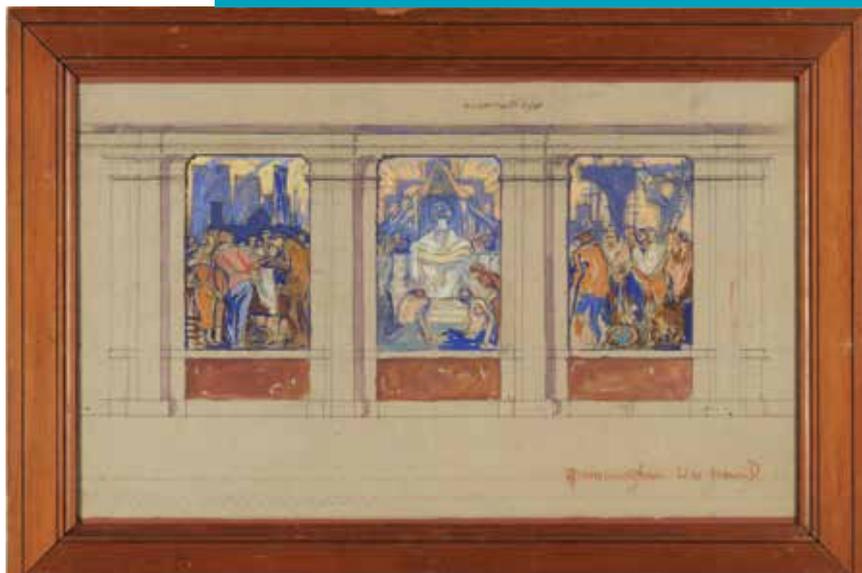


Find out more: Our first Meet the Artists event will take place on Tuesday 11 December 12.00noon-2.00pm at the Research and Cultural Collections Study Centre, 32 Pritchatts Road.

Please see our website at www.birmingham.ac.uk/rcc for upcoming events relating to the artists' projects, or if you would like to find out more about how to get involved please email rcc@contacts.bham.ac.uk



CAMPUS CURIOSITIES



Frank Brangwyn, *Study for Birmingham University War Memorial, 1921*, Research and Cultural Collections, University of Birmingham

This may represent rebirth – a popular motif at the time, following the atrocities of the Great War. The side panels represent industrial scenes of Birmingham, filled with chimneys and smoke. Brangwyn was known for his representations of and interest in industry. Brangwyn may also have been inspired by friezes on the Aston Webb Building by Robert Anning Bell. Brangwyn's project did not come to fruition; instead the University decided upon the Rolls of Honour that are carved in the entrance foyer. This is the only known study for the original idea.

Despite not being an official war artist, Brangwyn created over 80 posters, which are now synonymous with First World War propaganda. He also created many large-scale murals in North America, such as South Corridor at the Rockefeller Centre, New York.

What is it? *Study for Birmingham University War Memorial*, by Sir Frank Brangwyn, gouache on paper

Where is it? Research and Cultural Collections Study Centre (G1 on campus map)

Research and Cultural Collections is delighted to announce its latest acquisition *Study for Birmingham University War*

Memorial by Sir Frank Brangwyn. It was unveiled at the University's 'Remembering the Great War' event, aptly marking 100 years since Armistice.

Commissioned by Sir Aston Webb, architect of the original University buildings, Brangwyn designed a memorial for ex-soldiers consisting of three panels. The central panel features a religious scene. A figure is raised from the dead and celestial light rains down.

The University of Birmingham has attempted, without success, to determine who the copyright owner of this image is. After careful deliberation, we have decided to use it in this publication. If anyone has any information about the rights holder, would they please forward this information to: rcc@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Chancellor's column

In November, we held our 15th annual reception for our alumni at the House of Lords. This is a hugely popular event that is wait-listed within a day of being announced.

There were 350 guests present including alumni, friends and supporters from all over the world, including Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and of course the UK.

These alumni span more than 60 years of the University's history, with graduates present from 1953 up to 2017. There was such a wonderful atmosphere as we all took pride in the continued success of our university – outlined in detail by the Vice-Chancellor – including in research and teaching. We also highlighted our newly launched 10,000 Lives campaign, and thanks to the support of our alumni, we have already changed over 2,500 lives.

The University of Birmingham continues to retain its position as a top 100 institution

in the world and continues to be ranked in the top 15 in the UK.

As co-chair of the APPG for International Students – having just released the report on our inquiry into the future of international students in the UK – it is so reassuring that at Birmingham we have over 5,000 international students from more than 150 countries and 2,000 staff from overseas – we are a truly international university and now the fourth largest in the UK.

Our international dimension is further illustrated by the opening of our first overseas campus, the University of Birmingham Dubai, with 100 students already studying there – we are up-and-running, and soon we will start the building work for our full-sized campus.

Also this year, we have had three Royal visits, with HRH The Princess Royal opening our impressive new sports centre, HRH The Prince of Wales visiting the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research, and HRH The Duke of Cambridge attending the inaugural Prince William Award graduation ceremony in our Great Hall. This gave me immense pride as an ambassador for SkillForce, the organisation

that initiated and organised this award, which is a pioneering character resilience programme to help children from the age of six to dare to be their best self. SkillForce are extremely grateful to our University of Birmingham Jubilee Centre for Character and Values, for the support we have given.

Taking stock of all these achievements at the alumni event made us all so proud of the University of Birmingham. Onwards and upwards!

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



feeling social...

There are witches among us... and fantastic beasts...
and a touch of magic too!

To tie in with the release of the new *Fantastic Beasts* movie, we launched a new way of showcasing our research in an innovative and engaging way online – the #FantasticResearch campaign.

A series of videos were recorded for use on our social media channels, in which we asked academics to talk about areas of their research that relate to subjects in the films of J K Rowling.

The videos were short and light-hearted – with a 'magical' element in each one! Alongside the videos we recorded a series of podcasts where the academic was joined by a colleague to talk more in depth about their research area.

Questions ranged from: 'Why is the magical world of Harry Potter such a film phenomenon?' 'Do we have our own fantastic beasts?' and 'Will we ever be able to apparate, or travel through time and space?'

All of this content was shared across our central social media channels, supported by a digital advertising campaign to ensure a wider audience could enjoy them too.

The header of both our Twitter and Facebook pages were changed to a Fantastic Research themed image, a YouTube playlist hosted all the videos and the theme of our weekly Instagram Challenge, where we ask fans to share images to a set theme, was set as 'Harry Potter-esque'.

Around all of this we created additional content – from Tumblrs showcasing the fantastical creatures found around campus, video clips from the University's own Harry Potter Society supporting the Fantastic Research project and our new Student Influencers joined in with sharing the content on their own social media channels. We also created our own Instagram GIF stickers to use on the channel!

Discover the magical journey through some of our Fantastic Research for yourself here:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/fantastic-research



Mark Smith is a Service Delivery Manager within IT Services.

For Mark, his wife Kathryn and sons Kaleb and Alby, the University has had a profound impact on their lives. At just three weeks old, Mark and Kathryn's first child, Kaleb, was diagnosed with Fragile X Syndrome, a learning disability that affects around 1 in 4,000 boys.

This is Mark's story...

I grew up in nearby Northfield. My family had never been to university; higher education was completely alien to us and the Medical School was just somewhere that I rode past thousands of mornings on the bus into the city. Back then I had little idea how much the University of Birmingham would come to mean to me in my adult life.

Kathryn and I met when we were quite young. She was 18-years-old and had recently received the life-changing news that she was a carrier of the Fragile X gene – a mutation of the X chromosome.

As our relationship grew, we began to discuss the possibility of one day having children. Aware of Kathryn's situation, we got involved with the Fragile X Society – a small charity run by six people. The charity informed us about the condition and through their conferences we became aware of the University of Birmingham's research in the Cerebra Centre for Neurodevelopment Disorders.

When we started trying for a child we turned to our dedicated genetic counsellor at Birmingham Women's Hospital. We elected for a gender test to best prepare ourselves for the possibility of having a disabled child – boys only have one X chromosome so they tend to be more adversely affected than girls... the results showed that we were having a baby boy.

I'd only recently started working at the University when Kaleb finally arrived. We knew there was a 50 per cent chance that he would have the full mutation, and unfortunately, it was confirmed that he did at three weeks old.

Knowing a bit about the condition and his early diagnosis certainly helped, but as is the case for all new parents, the first couple of years were challenging.

When Kaleb turned three, we began to take him along to participate in research studies on campus. One of the first was a 2015 study on Social Cognition in Fragile X Syndrome, led by Professor Chris Oliver in Cerebra. Kaleb has since been involved with lots of research – he really enjoys coming onto campus – and has featured in videos introducing people to the research and what's involved.

The resulting report by Cerebra helped enormously in evidencing Kaleb's application for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which is a gateway to accessing appropriate services within education for those with disabilities, and determines the level of support. This was huge for us as a family and life-changing for Kaleb as it allowed him to enter mainstream education but with one-to-one support.

Kaleb is seven now and he's got a younger brother – two-year-old Alby. Alby is unaffected by Fragile X, and we owe that to the work of Dr Jackson Kirkman-Brown in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences and his multidisciplinary team at Birmingham Women's Hospital who helped us through Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis and IVF. Jackson is a world leader in fertility and was really supportive to us over our two-and-half year journey to get the one viable embryo that came to be Alby.

It was a difficult and emotionally draining time for my family, but it was so helpful having the University and hospital close by. When we were going back and forth to the clinic trying for our second child we'd often stop by the office. My colleagues were great with Kaleb, and for allowing me flexible working that made it just that bit easier.



It might have seemed small and insignificant, but having somewhere friendly where we could stop for a cuppa after an appointment was a big help.

The University has also given me skills that I have been able to offer to the Fragile X Society who help families like mine across the UK. The charity is close to my heart and has been a fundamental part of my life for many years. I am finally able to give something back by assisting them as a Director on their board of trustees. Kathryn and I (to be fair, it was mostly Kathryn) recently completed a 1,000km challenge to raise money for them, as like most small charities they struggle financially. People at work were really generous, and though I feel uncomfortable asking for money, the awareness that it raised led me to find a colleague whose family are also affected by Fragile X – so that was definitely worthwhile.

When I'm not at work I enjoy spending time with Kathryn and the boys – they love the campus and seeing things like the Lapworth Museum and attending our Community Day. It's a place that has become so familiar to us all, and I'll never forget the support that the University has given us in so many ways. I'm constantly reminded through my children how wonderful the University is as a place to work.