

Question Time



and finally...

Steve Hewitt

- 1 What do you do?**
I am a Lecturer in American and Canadian Studies in the College of Arts and Law.
- 2 What do you really do?**
I teach and do administrative work in order to be able to write about spying and counter-terrorism.
- 3 How do you get to work?**
I usually drive from Kings Heath although when it's not raining I try to cycle since this involves travelling along the canal to the University with Canada geese instead of cars as obstacles.
- 4 What's the best aspect of your job?**
The people – my colleagues, the support staff, and the students.
- 5 What's the worst aspect of your job?**
The bureaucracy. Having taught at universities in both Canada and the United States, I can attest to there being a lot more hoops to jump through in the UK. The current restructuring is yet another example of this atmosphere.

- 6 What would you like to be doing in five years' time?**
Living.
- 7 What do you most enjoy about University life?**
The amazing people I meet and the great places I get to travel to, including recent time spent in Iran teaching at the University of Tehran.
- 8 How do you unwind?**
Copious amounts of alcohol, exciting activities like a local pub quiz, watching North American sports on my laptop and lots of Scrabble playing.
- 9 Which book is on your bedside table?**
Leaderless Jihad by Marc Sageman.
- 10 What is your favourite tippie?**
I tend to hang around with women so Cava has become my drink of choice.
- 11 What makes a good night out?**
An evening involving a good movie, good food, and interesting and intimate conversation.
- 12 Which animal are you most like?**
A beaver.
- 13 Describe your favourite holiday?**
Going back to my little hometown in the summer.
- 14 What is your favourite sport?**
There is no other game that matches baseball. It exemplifies what is best about North America.
- 15 Who are the top three people on your fantasy dinner party list?**
Shami Chakrabarti, Osama bin Laden and Bruce Springsteen.
- 16 If you were a superhero/superheroine, who would you be?**
Aquaman.
- 17 What has been the highlight of your life, to date?**
The birth of my two children.
- 18 If you could banish one thing from the world what would it be?**
Insecurity.
- 19 Describe yourself in three words?**
Shy, impatient, Canadian.
- 20 What is your personal motto?**
Always be a pessimist since that way you'll never be disappointed.

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Pedal power!

Cycle fleet boosts campus safety

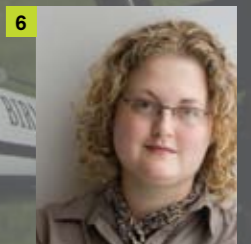
July 2008



Float on



Next VC



Fresh hope

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



Thank you to everyone who has contacted Buzz to deliver their verdict on the new-look staff magazine.

Following the June 4 launch, scores of readers have emailed, telephoned or returned comment cards to say how much they like the redesigned format. The July issue has been further tweaked to incorporate more improvements but please keep emailing in your thoughts, and especially your story ideas, to: university-buzz@bham.ac.uk

June's free draw for tickets to the BBC Summer Festival at the NEC produced possibly the biggest response yet to a Buzz offer. Five pairs of complimentary tickets were dispatched to the winners, who are listed on page five. Now we are offering readers the chance to win flights to Stockholm or Oslo with Ryanair (page 12).

This month, a new Vice-Chancellor has been announced to succeed Professor Michael Sterling when he steps down next year (page 3). We also put the spotlight on the University's Security operation (centre pages) and feature the inspiring story of Fresh Thinking's Manager Nicola Griffiths, who underwent a heart transplant in April (page 6-7).

Perhaps, like me, you have been straining your neck and walking into things while observing the courtship antics of the campus's resident birds of prey. Peregrine Falcons are once again roosting, and most likely nesting,

at the top of the clock tower and have been extremely vocal about the whole process, as Professor Graham Martin, of the Centre for Ornithology, reports on page 5.

Finally, during this hectic time of the academic year, don't forget to take advantage of the stress-busting opportunities on offer during Wellbeing Day on July 9. The programme includes the Corporate Relay Challenge and a scavenger hunt, as well as the treasures of the University Collections and the Farmers' Market adding to the diversity of the day.

Jenni Ameghino
Editor

Visit us: www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/buzz/

* Next month... Buzz will be a double issue covering August and September.

21st-century dad: less nature, more nurture

Being the genetic father of a child should not necessarily entitle men to parenting rights, according to a new study published by researchers from the University.

The study, which surveyed the opinions of men with a wide range of different experiences of fatherhood, found that most believe that meaningful fatherhood comes through providing care and support to a child, and not from a biological connection except in an 'obvious and unimportant' sense.

This goes against the current legal trend of ascribing paternal responsibilities and rights based on genetics.

The study, funded by a grant from the Wellcome Trust, is published in the current edition of *Clinical Ethics*, a journal of the Royal Society of Medicine.

The 12 focus groups, run by the team from the University's Centre for Biomedical Ethics, included men who are separated from their children, teenagers and men who have experienced unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. The researchers also spoke to men who had been sperm donors, and men who live in a traditional family unit with their children.

Lead author Jon Ives explains: 'All the groups of men that we spoke to felt strongly that to be a father in a meaningful sense you have to provide more than the genetic material.'

'Being a father meant playing a role in caring, providing and protecting a child. The men felt that this should take precedence over genetics in giving men a say in a child's life.'



HEFCE chief to be next VC

Professor David Eastwood (above), currently Chief Executive at the Higher Education Funding Council for England, has been appointed the University's next Vice-Chancellor.

Professor Eastwood will take up the role when Professor Michael Sterling (above right) retires in April next year.

Professor Eastwood has been Chief Executive at HEFCE since September 2006. His former posts include being Vice-Chancellor at the University of East Anglia and Chief Executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Board. An historian by academic background, Professor Eastwood previously held a Chair in Modern History at the University of Wales Swansea, where he was also head of department, Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

Professor Eastwood said of his appointment: 'In a period of change and challenge in the

higher education sector, Birmingham will prosper as one of the country's leading universities, will be a University of choice for students and staff, and will shine as a beacon of excellence in research, teaching, and impact. I will relish playing my part in building on the achievements of Michael Sterling's Vice-Chancellorship, and working with colleagues to position the university in the vanguard of English higher education.'

Jim Glover, Pro-Chancellor of the University and Chair of Council, 'David's breadth of experience and vision across the higher education sector, whether leading a university or an education funding body, proved to be a compelling combination. He will join Birmingham at a time when it is poised and ready to grasp new opportunities.'

Anti-Social Behaviour Officers receive awards

On June 10, a second group of Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, this time from across the UK, received their well-earned awards – having successfully completed this year's Certificate in Anti-Social Prevention and Intervention, from the Institute of Applied Social Studies.

The Certificate forms one of two academically accredited Certificate courses offered by IASS for professionals working within an anti-social behaviour or community safety remit. These have been combined and enhanced to form a Diploma and Masters Programme in Community Justice.

If you would like to find out more, please contact the new programme director Kathryn Farrow, at the IASS.



YOUR BUZZ

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

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Cover image: Paul Warren is among six Security Officers who will be patrolling the campus on bicycles from this month. Full story, page 8-9.

Ellen MacArthur visits hydrogen barge

Yachtswoman Dame Ellen MacArthur climbed aboard the University's hydrogen hybrid canal barge after setting off from the International Convention Centre as part of the Birmingham Climate Change Festival.

The craft, which is a silent, zero-emission craft developed by engineers at the University and at EMPA Switzerland, is a converted canal maintenance barge donated by British Waterways.

To achieve a zero emission propulsion system, Birmingham engineers have installed a fuel cell, a metal hydride store for the hydrogen, a battery stack and solar panels and the diesel engine has been replaced by a permanent magnet electric motor.

Ellen MacArthur said, 'I'm very excited that, through my partnership with EON, I'm able to be involved with The Birmingham Climate Change Festival. I'm keen to understand more about this inspiring new technology and how it can contribute towards a more sustainable Birmingham.'

Professor Rex Harris, from the University's Department of Metallurgy and Materials, who

is leading the project, says, 'This provided a wonderful opportunity to show Dame Ellen our barge.'

'We firmly believe that hydrogen is the way forward as the future non-carbon based fuel in land and water transport applications and our vision is to develop a canal-side hydrogen refuelling infrastructure and to generate green hydrogen at suitable sites throughout the inland waterways network.'



Inside story

Child psychologist Dr Gillian Harris let the cameras into her clinic for an ITV documentary, *My Child Won't Eat*, screened last month. In the hour-long programme she was seen working with patients, as she treats children who have a significant aversion to certain foods and who live on extreme diets.

Keep ahead of the game



Researchers are looking for West Midland sports teams to take part in a major project to help amateur athletes to recover more safely from concussions and head injuries.

The team from the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences is working to develop a computerised test that allows athletes to assess whether a player may be suffering from the effects of concussion. This will help amateur athletes to check whether they are safe to return to playing sport.

Anyone volunteering will be asked to complete a series of cognitive attention and memory tests, as well as answer some questions about their injuries. The main aim is to offer every athlete appropriate tests to assess head injuries, enabling them to enjoy and succeed at their sport, but stay safe.

Dr Martin Edwards, who is leading the project, comments: *'Even for professional athletes who have access to high quality medical care, the desire to return to play as soon as possible can lead to them risking their health. Making the right decision is much more difficult for the thousands of amateur athletes who compete every week in sports like rugby, martial arts and horse riding. Very often the obvious symptoms of concussion can subside, but the potential risks remain. Returning to sport while suffering from the effects of concussion can place an athlete at risk of more serious head injury.'*

Concussion occurs as a consequence of the brain being compressed and stretched rapidly within the skull following an impact between the head and an object moving in opposite directions. This rapid movement of the brain can lead to neural damage and can cause symptoms including headaches, memory and concentration difficulties, loss of consciousness or nausea.

Current tests for sports concussion involve assessments of memory and attention. The Birmingham team wants to see whether their extended tool, which includes tests of an athlete's decision-making capability, can help to pick up symptoms of concussion more effectively.

Mareen Weber comments: *'We are particularly keen to speak to players from sports like rugby, boxing, horseriding and football where head injuries can be a problem, but anyone who plays sport can get involved.'*

Contact Mareen on 0121 4145315 or via email at injury.sport@gmail.com

TREE update

The School of Civil Engineering hosted one of four pan-European Conferences on 'Developments in Engineering Education in Europe' which reported on the outcomes of European Thematic Network SOCRATES TREE (Teaching and Research in Engineering in Europe). The School of Civil Engineering played a leading role in TREE through Mr Kamel Hawwash, Acting Head of Civil Engineering who was Line Promoter for 'Attractiveness', investigating ways to a more students to engineering education. The 45



participants included representatives from Europe and the UK.

The conference was opened by Professor Nigel Weatherill, Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. Visit: www.3.unifi.it/tree.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jolly well done

Dr Mark Jolly, of the School of Mechanical Engineering, is the recipient of the 2008 Oliver Stubbs Medal from the Institute of Cast Metals Engineers which is awarded 'for the imparting of knowledge to fellow members on the practice and theory of founding'. The Oliver Stubbs Medal is awarded annually and is regarded as the premier award within the ICME and the UK metals casting industry.

Goodbye Annie

Annie Dyhouse, an MSc Co-ordinator in the Department of Psychiatry, Division of Neuroscience, said farewell to fellow colleagues when she retired at the end of June after 42 years of service. Annie joined the University in 1966 and has worked within Psychiatry for the past 21 years.

Running men

Dr Jonathan Grix, Senior Lecturer in German Studies and Research Methodology at the European Research Institute and Rob Andrew from planning, were selected to run for Great Britain in the Masters (over-35s) International Athletics meeting at Ashford on June 21 against Belgium and France. Rob was running the 800 metres and Jonathan the 3,000 metres. *'We are both training partners, both work for the University of Birmingham and are both members of Bournville Harriers running club!'* See August's Buzz to find out how they got on.

PGCE Ofsted success

Following a very full inspection week in January, the ITE secondary course has received a grade 1 'outstanding' for Management and Quality Assurance from Ofsted, the official body for inspecting schools. The full report is on the Ofsted web page.

Edinburgh date

University Curator James Hamilton will be taking part in the Edinburgh International Book Festival on 12 August (4pm, Pepper's Theatre) discussing his latest book: *London Lights – The Minds that Moved the City that Shook the World 1805–51* (Pub John Murray, 2007). The book is available in the campus branch of Waterstones.

Local derby double

Edgbaston Cricket Ground made history when it hosted its first University Twenty20 cricket match. The Universities of Birmingham and Warwick got a taste of what it is like to play professionally when they took each other on as a curtain raiser to the Warwickshire Bears and Worcester Royals game on June 20.

Going with the flow

Researchers have developed a mathematical model that helps to explain why our heart develops on the left side of our body and the liver on the right.

Writing in the *Journal of the Royal Society, Interface*, the team from the School of Mathematics used fluid mechanics to show exactly how tiny structures called cilia control the flow of fluid around the newly-fertilised embryo.

The flow from right to left they create is linked to the embryo losing its left/right symmetry, which is crucial in the development of all vertebrates. Vertebrates don't develop symmetrically, for example, the heart develops on the left side of the chest and the liver on the right side of the abdomen. This symmetry-breaking is necessary for survival and healthy development.

The research was supported by the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council.

The Birmingham team's model shows how a simple mathematical formula can give an excellent estimate of the flow produced by each individual cilium. This formula also shows that cilia need to be tilted at angle of 35 degrees facing the posterior of the embryo to produce the maximum flow rate.

The formula is supported by other groups' experimental observations of zebrafish and mouse embryos.

Dr David Smith, MRC Training Fellow, comments: *'In many ways it is remarkable to think how such a subtle phenomenon can play such a crucial role in how the structure of our body and internal organs develop.'*

Fairway to go

Success is par for the course for 22-year-old Lucinda Davies, who is not only set to graduate this summer but is making history by becoming the first female professional golfer to work in Egypt.

Golfing ace Lucinda is Head Golf Professional at Taba Heights Golf Resort in Egypt, where she teaches the sport to beginners and serious players.

'It's proving to be the best move of my life as I'm teaching and working with golfers and non-golfers from across the world,' said Lucinda, an assistant professional of the Professional Golfers' Association.



Left to right: Norman Beech, Ian Fowler and Adam Thickett

Adventure race triumph

Staff from the Raymond Priestley Centre at Coniston triumphed in the prestigious Boot and Paddle Trophy challenge. This is an adventure race for outdoor education centres from across the Lake District. Each team is made up of three staff and is limited to a total of ten teams.

The event involved three activity stages: an eight km road run to Lake Windermere, a six km kayak race on Windermere and a 14 km off-road mountain bike section through

Grizedale Forest. Each element was timed to provide every team with an accumulated time for the course.

Ian Fowler completed the run, Norman Beech the kayak section and Adam Thickett the mountain bike course. In a tense and exciting finish the Raymond Priestley Centre team were victorious with an over all time of one hour 29 minutes and 52 seconds. Visit: www.sport.bham.ac.uk/raymondpriestley

Peregrines around campus

Yelping birds apparently in distress have alarmed a number of people across the campus over the past few weeks, *writes Professor Graham Martin, of the School of Ornithology*. Often coming from high up on the clock tower these calls, although disconcerting, are in fact the signs that our resident Peregrine Falcons are probably having a successful breeding season.

Peregrines have been spotted around campus for quite a few years and have been recorded most months, often perched high up on the water spouts at the corners of the clock tower. A few years ago a nest box was placed in the belfry of the tower to encourage the birds to breed. This year, a pair of birds has been seen and heard calling to each other throughout the spring and there have been reports of the male bird bringing food to the female followed by aerial displays.

The calling is rather high pitched and pathetic sounding compared with the dashing image of a bird that is known as the fastest-moving predator in the world. It has not been possible to check on the belfry nest box this spring because of safety concerns, but it seems very likely

that the birds this year have a least attempted breeding and may have produced young.

Peregrines were once regarded as critically endangered in the British Isles but their population has now recovered and they are perhaps more numerous now than they have ever been. With all of their preferred coastal cliff nesting sites now occupied, the birds have started to occupy many large cities.

Here they find the ledges on high towers an attractive alternative to cliff ledges and use these to launch attacks on their preferred prey of pigeons. Our Birmingham campus provides a mix of high vantage points, undisturbed nest sites and, of course, plenty of pigeons.





Transplant brings fresh hope for Nicola

by Jenni Ameghino

When Nicola Griffiths began to feel out of breath while walking upstairs, she wasn't unduly concerned. *'There was a lot going on in my life at the time. I was preoccupied and ignored the symptoms for weeks and weeks,'* she remembers.

But when Nicky's mother finally persuaded her to visit her GP, her heart was found to be racing out of control – at a rate of 160 beats per minute. Urgent hospital tests confirmed it was seriously damaged, probably the result of a virus that triggered myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle).

'Looking back, I realise I was constantly tired, had a cough and a tendency to be fidgety and breathless' she says. *'One of my sisters was treated for a hole in the heart and I'd probably had problems for a long time.'*

After two years of medication, plus several sessions of cardioversion (where the heart is electrically shocked back into a normal rhythm) Nicky's fatigue worsened. All the 26-year-old manager of Fresh Thinking, the University's delivery service and events catering operation, could do was *'go to work, go home and go to bed.'*

It was a tough time for the bubbly young professional who nevertheless won the Manager of the Year award at the Hospitality and Accommodation Services 'OSCARs' in 2006 and led her 14-strong staff to be Team of the Year last September.

'I did have a lot of side effects from the drugs at first, including migraines and trembling hands, but that's improving now.'

Then, in February this year, she received a telephone call saying she had been referred to the transplant unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. *'It came as a bit of a shock,'* she says. *'The call somehow pre-empted my appointment with the cardiologist who*

was going to break the news that I needed a new heart!'

On April 10, just three days after being added to the transplant list, a donor heart became available. But despite Nicola's frantic rush to hospital from her home in Kinver, it was found to be unsuitable. *'I was almost relieved because it had all happened a bit too quickly,'* she admits. Having stepped off the emotional rollercoaster for little more than 24 hours, Nicky then received another phone call explaining that – in a rare scenario – a second heart was waiting for her.

'The staff never said the operation would definitely happen,' she recalls *'I lay on the ward, clock-watching with my boyfriend Matt and my mum and dad, until very late. I was quite quiet I think. We all were. Then they suddenly came to tell me they were taking me down to theatre.'*

The transplant took place shortly after midnight on April 15 and lasted five hours. The memory of her subsequent week in intensive care is hazy – *'apart from the fact I couldn't speak at first because of the breathing tube they'd put in.'* But she does recall the devotion of nursing staff. *'They made you feel so special. They did everything: washed me, dressed me; the lot.'*

Remarkably, ten days later, Nicky was home. Despite a hiccup in the third week post-transplant – when her body began rejecting the new heart, requiring three days of steroid drip treatment – she has been recovering well. When an alarm goes off in her handbag during our chat, she explains it is reminding her to take one of the 30 tablets she is required to swallow each day, including anti-rejection drugs, steroids, aspirin and anti-ulcer medication.

Her close friend and colleague, University Hospitality Manager Louise Gouldingay, who spotted Nicky's potential while she was on work experience and recruited her to Fresh Thinking in 2004, adds: *'Nicky's team love her very much and see her as inspirational. They have been rooting for her all the way.'*

As Buzz went to press, Nicky was due to begin a phased return to work just ten weeks after her transplant. *'I'm getting bored now*

and the house has never been so clean,' she laughs. *'I did have a lot of side effects from the drugs at first, including migraines and trembling hands, but that's improving now. I have to eat carefully; lots of wholegrains and fruit and vegetables, but I am allowed to drink alcohol – though not to excess!'*

Of her new heart, she says candidly: *'I don't think of it as mine really, not yet. I wrote a letter to their family via the hospital though. I am so grateful that I'm here, for Matt and for my family.'*

She continues: *'I worry, of course. I feel I can't plan anything. The average life of a donor heart is ten years, although I have recently met someone who has had a second transplant. I have been told that 12 months down the line I might even think about having children one day. I'm trying to maintain a positive outlook.'*

Fun day fundraiser

Nicky's story has really inspired all of the people who work with her in HAS, writes **Debbie Grant, General Manager, The Hub.**

So much so, that several of us are going to organise an event to raise money for the Heart and Lung Transplant Fund. Please put in your diaries the afternoon of Saturday 30 August when the team at the Hub down on the Vale are organising a fun day for staff and their families and friends to come and raise money.

They can do this by just attending, taking part in a mini-triathlon or sponsored walk round the lake, or sponsoring someone who is. We will have a cake stall, a sports day, tombola, raffle, treasure hunt and many more events to make the day a real fun day for everyone. Please support us in this worthwhile event to help Nicky and people like her.

Donations to UHB's Heart and Lung Transplant Fund: No 12.1.138 can be made via Sharon Beer, Transplant Co-ordinator. Email Sharon.beer@uhb.nhs.uk Donations are acknowledged by letter from Professor Robert Bonser, Director of the Transplant Unit and lead surgeon.

Keepers of the campus

Jenni Ameghino steps inside the University's Security operation.

Day or night, term time or holiday, rain or shine, for one group of University staff it is business as usual on every shift, all year round. The men and women of Security Section are 64 efficient, well-trained and highly-motivated individuals whose working lives are dedicated to protecting this vast institution and its diverse company of occupants.

The eyes and ears of the campus, they achieve their mission to guard and oversee our well-being through vigilance, round-the-clock patrols and a disciplined work routine; often seeming to know almost instinctively if something is afoot.

From experience they are aware that, being human, the rest of us will periodically forget to lock the office door, leave a tap running or a heater on, set off an intruder alarm or lose our wallet, purse or car keys down a drain. They know that students and alcohol can be a heady

mix, that secluded stone ramparts are perfect for late-night encounters of the amorous kind and that traffic-free walkways are a magnet for skateboarders.

They know that, being an 'open' campus, there will always be some unscrupulous individual who finds their way inside a building and, passing an open doorway, looks inside in case a laptop or handbag has been left unattended – so-called 'walk-in theft'.

Any wonder, then, that our high-visibility guardians are characteristically wary; adopting a firm but fair questioning of strangers in vehicles, a friendly rapport with fellow staff and a healthy interest in everyone else.

'It's a 24/7 task,' says Gordon Allt, who has been here for 28 years, the last three as Head of Security, during which time crime on site has fallen by 23 per cent. 'If you consider that the University estate includes the campus halls and



On guard: Security Officer Peter Cuffe mans the East Gate barrier.
Bottom: Left to right; Julie Roberts, WMP; Gordon Allt, Head of Security; Emma Thompson Det Sgt, WMP; Kevin Oakley, PCSO, WMP; Insp Phil Asquith, WMP; Sgt H Lenihan, WMP; Angela Freezer, Training and Crime Prevention Co-ordinator; Clive Reid, Deputy Security Manager.

takes in the Edgbaston Park Road buildings, the Selly Oak campus, the Medical School and Dentistry, it's a big area to cover.'

Divided into five teams, which enjoy good-natured rivalry, officers work either rotating or alternating shifts. Two teams are on permanent night patrol. They all work closely with West Midlands Police Duty Liaison Officer Julie Roberts and the campus's Police Community Support Officer PC Kevin Oakley.

'If I could change anything,' says Gordon, 'it would be to increase the number of females in the department (currently four). This imbalance seems to be a problem at other HE institutions as well and we are taking steps to tackle it.'

While it's tempting to think all the Security officers do is sit in the booth at East Gate talking to delivery drivers, this is far from the truth, he says. 'Every day is different; you never know what you are going to be dealing with. And that's what makes the job so challenging and interesting.'

There are medical emergencies, security alerts and practice runs. There are high-profile visits from politicians, dignitaries and celebrities, often requiring liaison with Special Branch. 'When Tony Blair came here on a visit, the police searched everything, including the sewers.'

There are occasionally more serious incidents, may be an organised protest or a chemical leak. On one occasion, a motorist 'didn't see' the East Gate barrier and stopped – somewhat needlessly – to point out that he'd broken it. Another time, a driver in a vehicle stolen outside campus but containing stolen goods smashed through it to escape.

With CCTV plus eight emergency telephones around campus and most people

carrying mobile phones, these days it is much easier to respond to incidents. Folk are more safety-minded, Gordon observes. 'Staff will challenge people they don't recognise, report suspicious bags or packages, which is a big step forward.' Even so, he would eventually like to see hi-tech access controls on all buildings. 'The University has some very valuable assets and we all need to remain vigilant.'

Last month, a state-of-the-art Control Room, installed by 2020 Vision Systems Ltd. was officially opened, ushering Security at Birmingham into the 21st century. There is some impressively slick hardware in operation here. And the cameras capture some interesting scenes, apparently. Gordon is far too discreet to give much away so let's just say that Security know some people on campus quite intimately.

'We are a diverse and multicultural Section,' says Deputy Security Manager Grover Reid – known to all as Clive – who has worked for the Security section for 24 years. 'Officers have to be aware, respond quickly and professionally to all situations; we have to be very sensitive to the needs of all our customers.'

Of course, there are times when things don't go quite according to plan. Such as the occasion, some years ago, when Gordon and several colleagues were patrolling a campus building (he won't reveal which) in plain clothes, hoping to catch some known offenders red-handed.

'It was a covert operation,' he says. 'Unfortunately, a well-meaning individual saw a group of people acting 'suspiciously' and reported us to the Police. Thankfully, once they arrived and realised who we were, it all turned out fine.'



Cycles enhance rapid-reaction force

The latest development in Security at Birmingham is a pilot scheme to enable officers to patrol the campus even more efficiently. From this month, six officers will be doing the rounds on slick, specially designed and equipped mountain bikes.

'We asked for volunteers for the pilot scheme and staff were very keen,' says Angela Freezer, Training and Crime Prevention Co-ordinator. 'At interview, candidates gave some really good reasons for wanting to be based on bikes, including cycles being eco-friendly, cycling being a great aid to fitness and, of course, being able to be faster around campus.'

Kitted out in the latest hi-tech cycling gear, the officers will be instantly recognisable on their liveried black and white bikes. The successful candidates are currently receiving advanced cycling proficiency training from Birmingham's resident cycle trainer Andrew Greenhall.

'They are excellent quality bikes. We are really looking forward to using them,' says Security officer and experienced cyclist Paul Warren. 'From the moment I arrived at Birmingham I thought the campus was of a size and layout ideally suited to cycles.'

'If the pilot proves successful, we hope to increase the number of officers on bikes very soon,' adds Angela.



By Day...By Night

Sue Newbury



By day I am International Student Advisory Service (ISAS) Administrator, responsible for day-to-day administration of the service, I help on Reception and I help to organise events ie. the International Student Coffee Afternoon and a recent Shipping Company Event. I am currently the ISAS Newsletter editor too.

Before taking on this role, I worked for the University but was based at the Selly Oak campus in the School of Education

(I joined in December, 1998, when it was Westhill College of Higher Education).

I worked as Student Services Officer in the Continuing Professional Development Unit and provided administrative support to the tutors and students on the BPhil/Dip HE in Community, Play and Youth Studies – unfortunately the course is closing after almost 100 years.

I'm divorced, but managed a family of three lively boys.

Outside the office, I am a bee-keeper and have two hives in the meadow at Winterbourne Botanic Garden. I am a member of the Birmingham Bee-Keeper Association which promotes bee-keeping and encourages members to attend events such as the Gardeners' Weekend held at Kings Heath Park in September.

I have wanted to keep bees ever since I was at junior school in Smethwick and the headteacher kept them, but I ended up being in my 40s when I began. I started keeping bees after the 'split' and have been keeping them now for 18 years, maybe more. They kept me very busy at a time in my life when I needed a distraction and at the moment I can't see me ever wanting to give them up.

It is a totally absorbing activity. As fellow apiarists say, every day is different because the bees haven't read the book! In summer we inspect the hives every ten days, looking for clues to swarming – such as very good weather or overcrowding – which you want to try to avoid as they'll settle somewhere else. There are probably 60,000-75,000 bees in these hives. I've had 70lbs of honey from just one hive at Winterbourne and that was in a bad year!

May is a busy time for swarms and I have collected many over the years – armed with a crisps box and a clean sheet. I once climbed my neighbour's apple trees in a thunderstorm to collect a swarm and survived!

Bee-keeping needs more funding for research into bee diseases, such as varroa and the recent Colony Collapse Disorder that is sweeping the US; for this reason bee-keepers are asking for more public support wherever possible. We are gathering signatures for a petition which you can find on Reception at Winterbourne.



Trials and tribulations

Professors Nick James (left) and Brendan Delaney reflect on how changes in legislation have affected the University's research and clinical studies.



Clinical trials are the final stages of development of new medicinal products for use in humans. The trials process is lengthy. Phase one studies establish the basic toxicity profile and safety. Phase two trials look at more patients and aim to establish whether the drug in question has useful activity against the target disease. For drugs that show promise in phase two, the final stage in development is a phase three trial, where the new treatment is compared to the current standard of care.

The same format is used for developing combinations of drugs, either new or existing. This basic design has remained unchanged for many years but recently there have been developments that have substantially impacted on the regulatory and bureaucratic burden associated with trials. Probably the most important change in recent years is the European Union Clinical Trials Directive, which came into force in the UK on 1 May 2004.

The aims of the Directive are

- To protect the rights, safety and wellbeing of the trial participants,
- To simplify and harmonise the administrative provisions governing clinical trials,
- To establish a transparent procedure which will harmonise trials conduct in the EU and enhance the credibility of the trials.

Like motherhood and apple pie, the aims of the Directive are clear and difficult to argue with. However, its implementation has resulted in a large increase in the bureaucratic burden associated with clinical trials as organisations were keen to ensure they complied with the absolute letter of the Directive as well as its spirit.

Cancer Research UK has estimated that the Directive increased the cost of academically-led cancer trials somewhere between two and four-fold. As a result of this increased cost and complexity, fewer trials can be carried out, therefore the over-all pace of medical advance is arguably slowed down, potentially endangering the wellbeing of far more people in the population than would have been harmed under the previous system. For pharmaceutical trials of a new agent it is clearly essential that the conduct of the trial documents all relevant data irrespective of the country where the trial is being carried out.

A knock-on effect of increasing the cost of trials for the pharmaceutical industry is a rise in the price of the drugs that are licensed following clinical trials after 2004. In an era when the *'dying patient denied life-saving drug'* headline is

a staple of the news media, increased costs of new drugs have adverse effects well beyond academia and the pharmaceutical industry.

The challenge for researchers now is to try and carry out trials that fully comply with the EU Directive but at the lowest possible cost. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example, standardising databases linking together the existing databases, for example, of radiotherapy treatments or blood salts to prevent the needed for manual capture of data and transcription into paper record systems. **NJ**

Bringing the community into translational medicine.

Whether it be to establish links between genes, physiology and disease, or to study the effects of a healthcare intervention, the recruitment of large numbers of research participants is essential. In most cases this relies on finding eligible people based on their age, sex or some pre-existing medical condition.

Relying on ad-hoc methods of identifying people, such as advertising or recruiting from a single clinical site, can lead to bias. There are very large amounts of information in the electronic health records (eHRs) of the 8,500 general practices in the UK, but it is neither feasible nor allowed under data protection rules to search laboriously through these records. Instead we can turn to web 2.0 technology.

The electronic Primary Care Research Network (www.epcrn.org) was funded by the US National Institutes of Health three years ago as a joint project between the University of Birmingham and the University of Minnesota, US. We are now working with the NHS to deploy a system whereby a researcher can set up a search of eHRs to identify suitable subjects, getting back not names and addresses, but merely 'counts', then flag those identified for contact by practice staff. In addition, the ePCRn system is developing a means by which research data and routine healthcare data can be linked together, either for epidemiological studies or for following up subjects entered into a study.

Further development of the ePCRn has been funded by the NIHR National School for Primary Care Research, with the aim of easing the burden on clinical trials by making recruitment and follow-up simpler, cheaper and more scaleable. **BD**

RYANAIR



BBC show winners

The winners of the June draw for free tickets to the BBC Summer Festival were: Christine Corbett, Mark Eccleston, Carole Liston, Catherine Robertson and Rachel Taylor.



Northern special! Win return flights to Stockholm and Oslo

Ryanair, Europe's number one low fares airline is giving Buzz readers the chance to win free flights to Sweden and Norway (excl taxes and charges!)

Stockholm is a vibrant, trendy big city with a small town atmosphere. The Swedish capital is a great mixture of history, modern design and nature, all in one city, with good shopping, fun restaurants and nightlife and great hotels.

With its 24,000 islands, the Stockholm archipelago is a unique environment to visit all year round. You'll find picturesque homes, delightful restaurants, quality hotels, youth hostels and country stores. Other islands have just their natural harbours and wildlife.

Visit the Absolut Ice Bar where everything, including the bar, is made of ice brought from the Torne River in Swedish Lapland. Sip vodka on the rocks from specially-made ice glasses and enjoy sculptures by some of the world's best ice artists, complete with spectacular lighting effects.

Oslo is the capital of Norway and is the natural hub of Norway's national and international travel. The city is beautifully situated at the head of Oslo Fjord surrounded by forested ridges. A varied cultural life flourishes in Oslo. From art to sculpture to architecture, Oslo has something to offer every taste.

First-time visitors are surprised by the wide range of restaurants and entertainment. Most are within walking distance of one another. Take a walk around the Vigeland Park. This is Norway's most visited attraction with more than one million visitors every year. Here you can

admire more than 200 sculptures by Gustav Vigeland (1869–1943), who also designed the layout of the park.

Ryanair will operate its new service from Birmingham to Stockholm (Skavsta) four days a week starting from July 2. The new Oslo (Torp) will operate three days a week starting from June 17. With 711 routes and having carried over 50 million passengers last year, Ryanair is Europe's number one low fares airline.

Visit www.ryanair.com

Buzz has four pairs of Ryanair free fare return flight tickets – two pairs to Stockholm (Skavsta) and two pairs to Oslo (Torp) – to give away to lucky readers this month. Just answer the following question to be in with a chance of winning:

Q. What is the name of Norway's most visited attraction?

Please email your answer to: university-buzz@bham.ac.uk (or send to the address in Your Buzz on page two) by the competition closing date of **July 10 2008**.

Terms and conditions:

- Flights subject to availability
- Taxes and charges applicable
- Normal Ryanair rules of carriage and baggage apply



What made British artist Gwen John produce no fewer than eight versions of the same painting?

'Mère Poussepin Seated at a Table' (above), from National Museum Wales, is one of four versions of the enigmatic nun reunited for the Barber's new exhibition.

John and her relationship with the Roman Catholic Church are the focus of the first summer loan exhibition at the Barber Institute, which opens on 4 July, **writes Andrew Davies.**

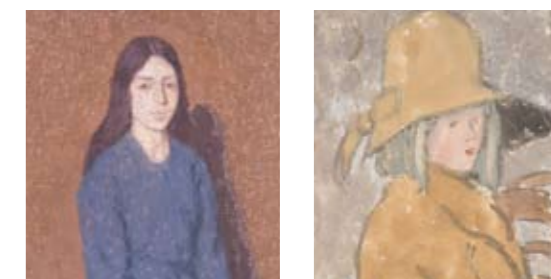
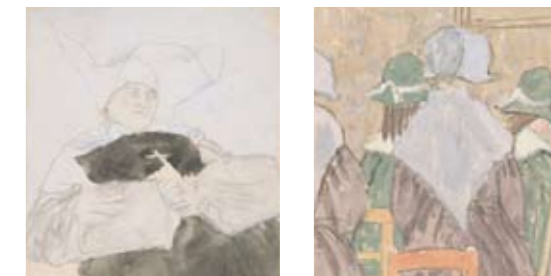
Reunited: Gwen John, Mère Poussepin and the Catholic Church is the first exhibition to examine the spiritual side of this reclusive, yet passionate and obsessive British artist, and how her conversion affected her work.

Welsh-born John moved to Meudon, near Paris, in 1911 to be close to the home of sculptor Auguste Rodin, for whom she had modelled, and with whom she had had an affair. However, as their relationship deteriorated, John turned to the Roman Catholic Church for comfort, becoming involved with the nuns at the town's convent. She took instruction in the faith and was received into the Church in early 1913.

Later that year she was commissioned by the nuns to paint a portrait of their founder, Mère Marie Poussepin, using as inspiration a 1911 prayer-card photograph of an original 17th-century portrait of the nun. This was followed by commissions for as many as seven further copies, one to hang in each cell of the convent – a project that occupied her for some seven years.

While the multiple portraits of Mère Poussepin were to dominate her artistic output, John was also a compulsive

Reunited brings together four of the Mère Poussepin paintings and other works they influenced, including *Girl in Blue*



draughtswoman. During church services, she would often be distracted from her prayers and turn to sketching the figures of devout fellow worshippers – nuns, priests, orphans and middle-class townswomen – as they prayed or listened to sermons. She also became obsessed by certain Catholic figures, such as St Thérèse of Lisieux, images of whom also appear in her sketchbooks.

Although her new-found faith was ridiculed by her brother, the successful portrait-painter Augustus, her notebooks are full of endless poignant reflections on religion, her struggle to lead a pious Christian life, and her art as an expression of her beliefs.

Reunited brings together four of the Mère Poussepin paintings, including the Barber's own version of the subject and examples from Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Tate, and Southampton City Art Gallery, alongside a copy of the original prayer card from the National Library of Wales. With loans from the National Museum's holdings of works on paper and private collections – many never displayed in public before – as well as memorabilia formerly belonging to John, the exhibition also contextualises the Mère Poussepin series, and features a selection of John's sketches in pen and watercolour made in church.

In addition, the display traces the Mère Poussepin commissions' profound and lasting effect on the artist's stylistic development, particularly on her treatment of the seated single female figure, such as *Girl in Blue*, which has been referred to as her 'secular nun' series. The exhibition will be enhanced with commentary on the spiritual aspect of selected works by former nun and Gwen John aficionado Tessa Frank.

The Barber's Director, Ann Sumner, who has curated the exhibition, said: *'While Gwen John has gradually been recognised as one of the most important female artists of the first half of the twentieth century, her spirituality and its effect on her art is an area that has, until now, received scant attention.'*

'This exhibition is a wonderful opportunity to redress that, as well as to examine one of the most popular paintings in the Barber collections and explore a fascinating story about a very individual artist.'

Staff recognised in Birthday Honours

Congratulations to Pat Niner, Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies who has been awarded the OBE for public and voluntary services to social issues. Pat works tirelessly with housing associations and deprived people in the West Midlands.

Congratulations also go to Professor Kenneth Spencer of INLOGOV, who has received the OBE for services to education and the voluntary sector. Professor Spencer is chair of Birmingham Settlement, a charity working for disadvantaged people in central Birmingham.

Congratulations to Kulwant (Pinky) Kaur, (bottom) a general catering assistant in

Hospitality and Accommodation Services, who was awarded an MBE for services to Higher Education and to the community in Birmingham.

Pinky has worked in the kitchens on the Vale for 32 years serving food to generations of students at Shackleton Hall. In 2006 she won a HAS Oscar for her contribution to the community. She will also receive a Foundation Fellowship Award this month.

Michelle Price the University's Catering Manager adds: 'Pinky is an extremely loyal member of staff, a really generous person, always looking after people and keeping us all together.'



Honorary graduands – Summer 2008



As Buzz went to press, plans were being finalised to confer honorary degrees on a total of 16 people. They are:

- 1 Mr John Edwards, Doctor of Sciences, July 11, 10.30am.
- 2 The Rt Rev. Stephen Venner, Doctor of Divinity, July 11, 1.45pm.

- 3 Mr Mike Welton, Doctor of Engineering, July 11, 4.30pm. (no picture)
- 4 Dr Richard Horton, Doctor of Medicine, July 14, 10.30am.
- 5 Professor Roger Hood, Doctor of Laws, July 14, 1.45pm.
- 6 Mr Jim Glover, Doctor of Science, July 14, 4.30pm.
- 7 Mr Jim Ratcliffe, Doctor of Engineering, July 15, 10.30am.
- 8 Mr John Armitt, Doctor of Engineering, July 15, 1.45pm.
- 9 Dr Doug Ellis, Doctor of the University, July 15, 4.30pm.
- 10 Sir Euan Gough-Calthorpe Bt, Doctor of the University, July 16, 10.30am. (no picture)
- 11 Sir Anthony Hughes, Doctor of Laws, July 16, 1.45pm.
- 12 Dr Frank McCormick, Doctor of Science, July 16, 4.30pm.
- 13 Professor Sally Davies, Doctor of Medicine, July 17, 10.30am.
- 14 Ms Elaine Padmore, Doctor of Music, July 17, 1.45pm.
- 15 Dr Benjamin Zephaniah, Doctor of Letters, July 17, 4.30pm.
- 16 Baroness Valerie Amos, Doctor of Laws, July 18, 10.30am.
- Concy Acivo, Alumna of the year, July 18, 10.30am (no picture)

Gallery Talk

Picture of the Month from the Barber Institute is Nicholas Poussin's 'Tancred and Erminia', c. 1634. Find out more about this picture at the Barber's website on www.barber.org.uk.

On 24 July, the picture also features as the focus of one of the Barber's weekly series of informal public Lunchtime Gallery Talks – meet in front of the painting at 1.25pm.



Sales

Venue: Staff House
Select Silver: July 3, noon-2pm
Sock Man: July 24, noon-2pm

Venue: University Centre foyer
Cosmetics: July 1
Moroccan Products: July 9
More Cocoa (Fairtrade): July 23
Beauty Products (perfume): July 25

Ideas Lab says thank you

Ideas Lab welcomed guests from the creative industries and students from the History, Film and Television (HFTV) MA course to an afternoon cream tea in the Business School. The event was held in recognition of the contribution made by independent production companies and broadcasters to the success of the HFTV course, now in its 12th year.

Guests were welcomed by Professor Stephen Shute, after which there was a screening of student work and a speech by Professor Scott Lucas in which he thanked industry partners through the years. Professor Dick Ellis, Head of American and Canadian Studies, presented the new award for 'Achievement in Industry' to Dan Jones, a previous HFTV student

Accommodation to let

Edgbaston: Large two-bedroom flat available from late August/September. £575pcm + bills. Would suit postgraduate or staff. Please contact Diana Stevenson d.stevenson@ikon-gallery.co.uk

Edgbaston: Room in private house. Lounge and bathroom shared with one other. University one mile. Staff/postgraduate, non-smoker. £270pcm inclusive. Tel: 454 3071.

Five Ways, Edgbaston: Room in private house, attractive garden. Good public transport. One-bed flat available. Details, ring 0121 429 1353 after 6pm.

Harborne: Double room to let in two bedroom house. Available now. £290pcm + bills. For details please call 0121 415 8067.

Accommodation for sale

Kings Heath: Just off High St (Moseley end), four-bed, 1920s semi-detached convenient schools, all local facilities, bus routes. Two reception, breakfast/dining room, newly fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, downstairs cloakroom, Garage, d/g and c/h. Largish mature well maintained garden. OIRO £395,000 Inquiries: 0121 689 2597.

Marlbrook, Bromsgrove: Maisonette, two double bedrooms, refitted kitchen, bathroom. Gas heating. No stamp duty. £124,950 no chain. 414 5182.

Moseley: 1930s detached house, four bedrooms (one en-suite), modern bathroom, breakfast room, through lounge/dining room (dividing folding doors); modern kitchen, laundry, garage. 45m garden (pond, greenhouse, shed). Central heating. Re-wired. Off-road parking. £390,000. 0121 449 4550.

Selly Oak, Reservoir Road: three beds, twobaths, new kitchen, lounge. Off road parking, tidy garden, large patio, gas central heating/water, alarmed. Recently redecorated throughout. Sale £125,000 or short-term let at £550/pcm. Owner is University employee. Tel: 07974 081260 or 0121 478 0343.

Tenby: 3b 6p 4* duplex apartment close to town walls, beaches etc, allocated secure parking. Short breaks from £185. Tel 0121 430 2167. email: bdmm1996@yahoo.co.uk.

Yorkshire Dales: Wensleydale House, Leyburn. 4 star self catering for up to 10, fully equipped. Contact Tim Pearson ext 45945 or visit www.wensleydale-house.co.uk

Prague: luxurious two bed, two bath flat available for long weekends or holiday lets. Sleeps four, 25 mins city centre by public transport. O.klein@btinternet.com

Services

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

PC trouble? MCS can be your IT support at home. No fix, no fee. 07837 179282, www.milboro.co.uk, mcs@milboro.co.uk

Have those jobs done now. Large or small. No mess. No VAT. Guild of Master Craftsmen member. Paul Davis 0121 427 7179.

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DPM Roofing Services Built-up felt roofing specialists UPVC, fascias, soffits and guttering. All work guaranteed. Tel: 07739 553574/ 0121 429 8434.

Decorating? Fence need painting? Relax and leave it to the professionals! All jobs considered. Contact C. Baker on 07791 880896.

Need a Plumber? Bathrooms, kitchens, showers, tiling, etc. All work guaranteed. Fully insured. Tel: 01902 345 032. Mob: 07773 367573. Email: et.plumb.services@blueyonder.co.uk

Just Sew All alterations, garments made to order also soft furnishings. No job too small. Tel: 07866 973011.

The University Dental and Implant Centre is open to all members of the public for a full range of dental services including routine care, cosmetic dentistry and dental implants. We are in the Health Centre on 5 Pritchatts Road. Visit www.universitydental.co.uk for full information or telephone our reception on 0121 687 8882.