

Engineering the Future of Education

1st year PhD student Sarah Palmer met Education Minister, Alan Johnson, during his recent visit to the Department of Chemical Engineering. Sarah recently received a 1st class degree on the Meng in Chemical Engineering and is working with a company called Mercks Sharpe and Dohme. The Minister was shown a range of research projects from extraction of pharmaceuticals from plants to improving the taste of chocolate and beer. For the full story see page 3.

Universities Agree on *New Admissions Test for Law*

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Birmingham is one of eight English University Schools of Law who this month announced their intention to establish a new uniform admissions test for their undergraduate law degrees.

The National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT) will be designed to be used alongside GCSEs, A-levels and other existing selection mechanisms. It is anticipated that the first LNAT will be sat in November 2004. It will be a test of about two hours' duration, combining multiple choice questions with a short essay. An established exam board will be contracted to set the test and administer it in schools and colleges, nationally and internationally. The precise format of the test will be determined over the next few months, and sample question papers will be provided for practice. International students will not be required to take the test in the first year of its operation but may choose to do so if they wish. Birmingham will chair the inter-institutional LNAT committee during the set-up period.

Announcing the launch, Dr. Tim Kaye, Undergraduate Admissions Dean of the School of Law said: *'The growing number of candidates with top scores at GCSE and A-level has made it increasingly difficult for the most competitive Law Schools in the country to rank their applicants satisfactorily. To help with this problem, several of the Law Schools involved in this proposal already have, or were about to adopt, admissions tests of their own. The LNAT will allow them to pool their expertise, reduce the overall number of tests taken by aspiring law students, and give more even-handed and transparent consideration to all of their candidates.'*

The precise format of the test will be determined over the next few months, and sample question papers will be

provided for practice. Birmingham will chair the inter-institutional LNAT committee during the set-up period.

Dr Kaye said: *'In GCSEs and A-levels we already have measures of existing educational achievement, which is important. But we would like to do more to identify relevant intellectual potential, which is also important. One obstacle to the widening of participation in University education is the difficulty of identifying relevant intellectual potential. The LNAT will not solve this problem but we believe it will help. We all regard it as a plus for access.'*

For more information please contact Dr Tim Kaye, Undergraduate Admissions Dean, School of Law ext 46315

A Quick Word...



For a nation that has such an obsession with the weather we certainly were caught out last month when the predicted snow and ice came a day late. 250 unlucky staff were stranded on campus as traffic ground to a halt in the city centre and around the University with around 30 members of staff opting to sleep in their offices rather than attempt their journeys home. For the full story see opposite.

The University was honoured last month when it was awarded a prestigious award for its educational achievements. Distinguished Ukrainian delegates from Ukrainian-based Golden Fortune made a special visit to the University to present the Chancellor, Sir Dominic Cadbury, with the Georgian Medal II Degree of the Golden Fortune, for the University's outstanding, enlightening and educational activity. For details and photo see opposite.

We're spoiling you this edition with not one but two exclusive offers. For the theatre lovers amongst you we have arranged special ticket rates for Alumnus Robert Warrington's debut play *Forward at The Door* (Birmingham Rep) and *The Reduced Shakespeare Company's All the Great Books - Abridged*. See page 11 for details. And don't forget to check out the competition on page 11 where the Business School has a magnum of champagne up for grabs!

Sam

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University Facilities Help Ease Gridlock

The University accommodated an extra 250 people overnight during the cold snap at the end of last month. Rooms and floors quickly filled up in the Lucas House conference facility when the city became gridlocked as a result of the extreme weather road conditions.

Staff showed their resourceful nature as road conditions became apparent in the early evening. Around 30 members of staff slept in their offices rather than attempt their journeys including Jim Reynolds, a lecturer in ornithology and animal conservation the School of Biosciences. Jim, who lives 30 miles away from the University in Pershore, spent the night in his room with a blanket and a fleece for a pillow.

'It was a case of self-conservation really' said Jim 'But the office was warm and I managed to get some sleep.'

However, he admitted this is not the first time he has turned his office into a bedroom: *'This is the first time I have slept in the office since I was an over-worked PHD student in Oxford. Given the choice again, I would definitely choose to sleep at work, rather than tackle an icy motorway.'*

Despite his unconventional sleeping arrangements, wide-eyed Jim carried on with his lectures the next day.

Students living in Selly Oak and surrounding areas were seen giving standstill drivers hot drinks and offering use of their toilets.

Geoff Pringle, Director of Hospitality and Accommodation said: *'I am delighted that the University could be of assistance to our local community at a difficult time. As we wait for the thaw*

heart-warming tales are buzzing around campus. And I'm sure drivers in the Selly Oak area were happy to ignore the sometimes dubious hygiene of student toilets to answer calls of nature!'

The University's expert in winter maintenance of roads John Thorne, Reader in Applied Meteorology says: *'The first band of snow was less than predicted so people maybe became complacent and thought the worse was over. The second band was much more severe. Four times as much salt is needed for snow as for ice, and the roads should have been re-salted at lunch time. People should also have headed home earlier before the freeze, and maybe if the fall had been heavier in the morning people would not have driven.'*

'We are ill-equipped for this type of weather, in fact snow and ice are more slippery at 0 degrees than minus 10 so this hindered us. Also in other countries they use softer winter tyres for the whole season.'

University Forges Golden Partnerships



A group of distinguished Ukrainian delegates last month made a special visit to the UK to present the University with a prestigious award for its educational achievements.

Chancellor, Sir Dominic Cadbury was presented with the *Georgian Medal II Degree of the Golden Fortune*, for the University's outstanding, enlightening and educational activity. The accolade was given by Golden Fortune, a Ukrainian-based International Rating that recognises the achievements of prominent persons and outstanding cultural and scientific centres, internationally.

Ivan Fedorovych Kuras, Deputy Head of the Rating Presidium and Vice-

President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, presented the University with *Golden Fortune's* highest award, in the shape of the silver statue: *Fortune Goddess with Golden Sword*. This honour has also been bestowed on such eminent recipients as the Pope of Rome John Paul II, opera star Placido Domingo and the Nobel Committee.

The prize-giving was attended by a number of distinguished guests, including Ivan Kooras and Dmytro Akimov, Head of the Rating's General Directorate and as such responsible for the making of the award. University representatives included Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Sterling and Vice-Principal, Professor Michael Clarke, along with several Ukrainian students.

Sir Dominic said: *'We are honoured to receive this accolade alongside such other outstanding recipients, and we look forward to welcoming our Ukrainian guests to the University.'*

'The award not only recognises the University's outstanding contribution to education, but it also demonstrates our commitment to becoming an internationally-recognised centre of excellence in research and learning. We hope this partnership will pave the way for future collaborations - not just with Ukraine but across the globe.'

Fairtrade Fortnight

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight will take place from 1 - 14 March. As a Fairtrade University we will be celebrating the occasion with a series of events in the Guild and a display in Staff House. These include a 'Man o Man' Competition, a Fairtrade debate and a Fashion Show featuring clothing sourced from ethical suppliers. For further details contact the Ethical Trade Society

Email: ethicaltrade@guild.bham.ac.uk

All University catering outlets offer Fairtrade tea, coffee and confectionery.

Alumni Media and Arts Network

More than 60 alumni joined Vice-Principal Professor Michael Clarke at Westminster's new City Inn for the second alumni media and arts network.



It was a lively occasion as graduates from the worlds of television, publishing and music took the opportunity to make useful connections and share a few Birmingham memories. Well known faces at the event included author David Lodge and Midlands Today presenter Michael Collie.

The next alumni professional network event takes place in March for alumni lawyers in the London area.

For more details contact Claire O'Sullivan. Tel: 0121 414 4139, or for the complete 2004 alumni event calendar email alumnioffice@bham.ac.uk or see www.alumni.bham.ac.uk

Saturday Night Fever for 70s Alumni

Last term's 1970-1974 alumni reunion proved a success with around 200 former students and guests attending. Alumni travelled to Birmingham from around the globe for the occasion - from as far as the United States, Australia and even South Korea.

The Vice-Chancellor hosted a Reunion Dinner in the Great Hall which was followed by an authentic '70s disco which had guests singing, dancing and staying out until the early hours!

Special thanks go to all staff that helped make the event a memorable occasion for alumni and their guests.

Education Minister Sees Birmingham Chemistry at Work

The Education Minister, Alan Johnson, visited the University earlier this month to see a range of research projects at the Department of Chemical Engineering involving undergraduate students.

The Minister saw examples of work on both process understanding and product improvement such as extraction of pharmaceuticals from plants, improving the taste of chocolate and beer and innovative use

of medical 'body scanning' to probe inside manufacturing processes.

Professor Jonathan Seville, Head of the Department of Engineering, said: *'We are delighted to be able to showcase our work and to demonstrate how our research informs our teaching on our undergraduate courses. This gives our students links with industry at an early stage of their university careers and helps us to establish better industrial placements and continuing professional development courses in the workplace.'*

Birmingham Filters Help Search for Beagle 2

Researchers in the School of Engineering have produced a state-of-the-art superconducting filter which has been used in the search for lost Mars probe Beagle 2.

When the filters are connected to the low temperature recover at Jodrell Bank observatory they help in the search for the smallest signals emanating from Mars. Astronomers at Jodrell Bank observed radio transmissions from Beagle 2 following each of the first three nights spent on the Martian surface, searching for the pure carrier signal that the robot was supposed to transmit.

In order to be able to carry out these observations, the observatory built a state of the art receiver, cooled to a temperature of ~15K to reduce the thermal noise component of the amplifiers and more importantly to allow the inclusion of the Birmingham built high temperature superconducting filters. The filters allow a very weak signal to pass with very little loss and totally eliminate the strong interfering terrestrial signals nearby that would otherwise have swamped the receivers. Filters built from normal material could have rejected the interfering signals but would have introduced significant loss within the pass band.

Prior to the observations a spare Beagle 2 transmitter was brought to Jodrell Bank to carry out a complete system check on the ground. A test transmitter was also

built that could be programmed to precisely simulate the Beagle 2 transmissions. This was used both before and after each observation to carry out a full check of the complete system.

No signal was heard from Beagle 2 at its first scheduled transmission via the Mars Odyssey spacecraft on Christmas Day 2003. The observations were extended in case the system clock had reset and the lander could be transmitting at any time. Although the site was observed during the whole time that the landing site was visible from Cheshire from 25 - 28 December, sadly no signals were detected.

All attempts to communicate with Beagle 2 were suspended for 10 days following January 12 in an attempt to forced the lander into 'help me' mode where it would have transmitted a beacon signal for 1 minute in every 10 during the Martian day but again, no signals were detected. Attempts to communicate with the lander from the Mars Express spacecraft were unsuccessful and scientists have concluded that it is very likely that no contact will ever be made with Beagle 2. A final command to re-boot the computer was to be sent on 27 January, but it was unlikely that this would have any effect.

Although Beagle 2 was not detected, among the many scientific accomplishments of the mission was the new receiver made possible through a close collaboration between Jodrell Bank and Birmingham. The receiver built has the best performance in world for operation at this frequency.

Spin Cycle

While we look for a bit more space to detail colleagues' media engagements, here's a brief roundup of headlines for the past couple of weeks.

Theology's **Jorgen Nielsen** was interviewed for German TV channel ARTE on the Muslim headscarf debate in France; Academic Registrar **Dave Hall** was profiled in *Pathfinder's Guide to the West Midlands*; **Tim Houghton** of CREES participated in a live discussion on Slovak TV (TA3) examining the political implications of Lord Hutton's report into the death of Dr David Kelly; The School of Law's **Stephen Shute** was interviewed by Central News in relation to a crime-related story; **Tim Kaye** and **Sarah Green** represented the School of Law discussing the LNAT story in a range of media: BBC One, Six o'Clock news; BBC News 24; BBC Radio 4; BBC Radio 1; BBC Radio WM; SAGA Radio; Heart FM; *The Guardian, Education; The Times; The Telegraph; The Independent; The Birmingham Post; Education Guardian.co.uk*; *BBC News Online; The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) Daily News; IC Birmingham* and *The Times Online*; The School of Medicine's **Christopher Barratt** was interviewed by BBC Science Lab Rats; BBC Radio WM; *The Birmingham Post* and *The Birmingham Evening Mail*; **John Thornes** and **John Kings**, meteorologists from the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences gave expert comment to the *Worcester Evening News, Birmingham Evening Mail, Birmingham Post*, BBC Radio WM, Central News and Midlands Today regarding the extreme weather conditions that brought the city to a standstill in January; **Delyth Chambers**, Director of Admissions, gave an interview to BBC Radio WM regarding the announcement that the Institute of Physics are to offer bursaries to students to study Physics from 2006 onwards; **Roy Harrison**, Head of the Division of Environmental Health and Risk Management, spoke to *The Birmingham Post* regarding the University's involvement in the Natural Environment Research Council's new Distributed Institute for Atmospheric Composition; **Steve Thornes** from the English Department was a panellist on BBC Radio 5 Live's discussion programme on whether accents hold people back in life; **The Vice-Chancellor** gave a broad range of interviews regarding the Higher Education Bill and the vote in Parliament, including BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Sky News, BBC2's Newsnight, Saga 105.7 FM, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC News 24, BBC2's Special live vote programme, BBC1's 10pm News, *Times Higher Educational Supplement, Evening Standard, Birmingham Evening Mail, Birmingham Post*, BBC Radio 4's *The World Tonight*, BBC 1pm News; Vice-Principal **Michael Clarke** also gave comment to BBC World Service and BBC Radio WM; **Andy Chambers**, Admissions Tutor from the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, provided a lecturer's view on tuition fees and the Higher Education Bill to virginstudent.com; **Christien van den Anker** from the Centre for the Study of Global Ethics gave interviews to *The Birmingham Evening Mail*, BBC Radio WM, *The Guardian* and Saga 105.7 FM regarding her new book, *The Political Economy of New Slavery*; **Vincent Gaffney** and **David Smith** from the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity gave interviews on their recent Bronze Age discovery in a riverbed in Croatia to *The Birmingham Post, Birmingham Evening Mail, The Guardian, The Times*, BBC Radio WM, *Current Archaeology magazine* and Croatian National Radio; **Nick Blinco** of Development and Alumni briefed the THES on alumni relations; **William Doe**, Dean of the Medical School, spoke to *The Birmingham Post, the Guardian* and Radio 4 about plans for a Medical Practitioner Associates Course; **David Dunn** of POLSIS, gave neutral opinion to *Metro London* on the post-Gulf war inquiry; **Lawrence Young** of Cancer studies, gave interviews about encouraging new cancer mortality figures to BBC Cambridge, Beacon and Saga FM, and discussed the recent lab fire with Central and BBC news, *The Birmingham Post, Evening Mail*, BBC Radio WM, and Heart FM; Hospitality and Estates' **Geoff Pringle** spoke about the cold weather sleep-over to *The Birmingham Post* while **Jim Reynolds** of Bio-Sciences gave his first-hand experience to Midlands Today; **Chris Wickham's** Medieval History lecture was filmed for the BBC One o'Clock News; Education's **Sue Morris** discussed catchment areas with BBC Midlands Today and English and Cultural Studies' **Gezim Alphon** had an article published in *The Birmingham Post* on human rights.

Marcus' Marathon Challenge

Deputy Director of Recruitment, Marcus Williams, will be taking on an extra challenge this year; training for the London Marathon alongside juggling work and study commitments.

Marcus will be motivating himself during his gruelling training regime with the fact that he will be raising money for a worthy cause at the same time.

With a personal best of 3 hours 28 minutes and a London Marathon

official time of 3 hours 44 minutes and 17 seconds, Marcus is aiming to knock 25 minutes of his time in this year's race. He would like to hear from anyone else who is also running the event and looking to run a similar time and would like a training partner for those long training runs.

'Running 40+ miles a week after a long day in the office is hard, especially on those long dark Winter nights, but when you know you're running for a good cause and to raise awareness of such an important area it keeps you going.'

The Most Sensitive Eye in the World



Working alongside colleagues from the Universidad de Oriente in Venezuela and the Université de Montreal, Professor Graham Martin may have identified the most sensitive eye in the world.

The eye in question belongs to a species of bird from the tropical rainforests of South America. Graham and his colleagues' investigations focus (no pun intended) on the quite extraordinary adaptations of the eyes of Oilbirds (pictured above), a species of nocturnally-active, cave-dwelling birds that quite literally never see the light of day.

Graham's research addresses a serious scientific problem. While vertebrate eyes are one of evolution's greatest triumphs, they are an inevitable compromise; no single eye can be good at everything. The eye's main visual functions of resolution and sensitivity are in opposition to each other. Understanding how those compromises are achieved and traded in the eyes of animals with different behaviours and ecology, gives an insight into the limits of natural optics and image analysis. Graham and his colleagues believe that, in the case of the oilbird's eyes, natural selection has pushed visual sensitivity close to its limit, and that this is achieved through adaptations of both the optical system that produces the images of the world, and of the retina which analyses that image.

The oilbird's high light gathering capacity is 4 times faster than in a human eye and is coupled with a unique banked retina that squeezes in

photoreceptors at more than two-and-half times the density than that of other species, including humans. This exceptionally high number of receptors serves to maximise the chances that every photon of light that enters the eye will be intercepted. Banked retinas in which receptors are piled on top of each other, rather than simply spread out in a single layer across the retina, have only previously been found in deep-sea fishes that live in total darkness guided by light flashes from the photophores of other fish. However, banked structures such as these do not provide the brain with accurate information as to where in the eye's image light has been received from so, while Oilbird eyes gain exceptional sensitivity they must have very poor resolution.

Graham said: 'Oilbirds have yielded up one of the sensory secrets of their unique life style and in so doing have helped to define the evolutionary limits of vertebrate eyes. However, this research only makes sense when the results for one species are viewed within a broad comparative context: comparing and contrasting eye structures and life-styles across many species.'

Graham hopes to continue his studies with other species that show interesting sensory problems that may have pushed eye structures and their functions in different directions.

mental health problems and learning disabilities.

If you are interested in providing sponsorship or joining a training team, please let Marcus know on: M.C.Williams@bham.ac.uk.

All sponsorship and donations will be gratefully received via the Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Office.

Changing Tastes of Student Life



(Left to Right) Sue McLaren and Lesley Stewart pictured in the foyer of Staff House with the display of artist's impressions of the planned developments at Shackleton Hall on the Vale

By Ros Dodd

It's not many years ago that halls of residence were at best functional and at worst woefully lacking in home comforts. Today, Birmingham leads the way in providing the kind of student accommodation demanded by three-star hotel guests.

'Students are very sophisticated these days,' says Lesley Stewart, general manager (student accommodation) of the University's Hospitality and Accommodation Services (HAS). 'They want style as well as comfort, hi-tech facilities and a wide range of services and amenities on tap. The Vale – currently undergoing a complete and innovative overhaul – will provide all that in spades.'

Birmingham has 5,000 accommodation units, both catered and self-catering, at 14 sites dotted around the campus and surrounding area, guaranteeing first-year undergraduates and first-year post-graduate international students a home on campus. Outmoded styles of accommodation, such as shared bathroom facilities, are gradually being replaced by modern study bedrooms with en suite facilities and other 'must have' amenities.

The new-look properties are the result of a major review of the University's accommodation stock carried out five years ago.

'We had an awful lot of 1960s-built catered halls of residence and I think the University recognised that in order to keep pace with what students want today, we would have to tackle the issue,' explains Lesley.

First, a survey was carried out to find out what students were looking for in a hall of residence. Then began the long process of modernisation.

'The feedback wasn't surprising,' says Lesley. 'They wanted to be close to campus and they wanted a range of services and facilities.'

The first of the revamped residences, Jarratt Hall in Selly Oak, opened in September 2001. Consisting of 129 self-catering apartments designed around a central courtyard, it provides 620 en suite study bedrooms. Between three and six students share a kitchen and lounge. Facilities include two 24-hour launderettes and a telephone/data link in each bedroom.

Based on the success of its 'guinea pig' project, the HAS turned its attention to The Vale, the University's largest student village. In landscaped grounds that include a small lake stand three distinctive-looking 1960s halls of residence.

The first block to be refurbished, at a cost of £14.9 million, is Shackleton Hall, which will be renamed – through a competition in *Buzz* – and will act as the central hub of the Vale site. The upper floors are being turned into 340 en suite study bedrooms, while the lower floors will house two bars, a food court, shop, vending facilities and a 24-hour reception service. The minimalist design, featuring mezzanine floors and plenty of glass, chrome and wood, is certain to appeal to today's students.

'Students will be able to have breakfast when they like and after a night out there will still be the opportunity of food,' explains Sue McLaren, who is Director of University Catering. 'We are also putting together meal packages students can buy into using a smart card that forms part of their university identity card. So it's like an electronic purse.'

The Shackleton Hall central hub will be supported – as all the University's catering outlets now are – by the central kitchen, which opened last September.

'We are trying to provide something students wouldn't necessarily expect to get on campus. For instance, we're talking to Costa Coffee about opening an outlet, and we're planning to put in turbo woks so that, as happens at the Mongolian Bar in Birmingham city centre, students can choose their own balti or Chinese ingredients and take it to a chef who will cook it for them.'

Sue and Lesley are keen to stress the close involvement of students in the redevelopment of the Vale.

'We are working in partnership with the Guild of Students,' says Sue. 'They will run the bars and shop and be responsible for the entertainment programme.'

The Guild will also employ student mentors to live in the new hall of residence so they are on hand to offer help and advice to their peers. 'We are the only university in the country to provide this service,' says Lesley. 'The way it works is that if a student has a problem – whether it's 'I don't know where the nearest supermarket is' or 'I'm homesick' – they can go to a mentor who will be able to point them in the right direction in terms of getting the help they need.'

The central kitchen is another 'first' among UK universities. It was built, at a cost of £3.5 million, on the site of the old Chamberlain Hall kitchen.

'The food for every one of the 33 catering outlets on campus is cooked here,' explains Sue. 'So this unit, which employs a staff of 43, provides anything from a sandwich to a banquet for 500 people.'

Once cooked, dishes are distributed around the University in refrigerated vehicles. Function meals are also prepared in the same way some of London's top hotels organise their catering requirements.

'One reason we decided to go down this route is that we were going to have to spend a lot of money replacing the various kitchens on campus,' says Sue. 'There was also a shortage of good chefs, and we wanted to produce food of a consistent quality.'

Other additions to the 'foody' side of university life is the granting of Fair Trade status – Birmingham is only the second university to achieve this – and the development of in-house brands.

'We are very much aware of what students want,' stresses Sue. 'Everything we provide has to have a flexibility so that we can go with the trends. And we do listen to the students, because the only way what we do is going to succeed is by getting them on board and making them feel they are part of the decision-making process.'

Of course, students' 'wish lists' are restricted by financial considerations. So although they might like their shared kitchens to be fitted with dishwashers, in order to keep rents affordable, HAS – a self-financing arm of the University – can't fulfil every mod cons request.

'We have to keep an eye on rents to make sure what we are offering is comparable to what is on offer in the private sector and at other universities.'

With British universities becoming increasingly competitive, and student tastes becoming more sophisticated, Birmingham has realised that it has to take account of modern day mores.

Says Sue: 'Until recently universities didn't really consider them as such, but students are customers and that's how we have to treat them.'

The Huxley Lecture

THURSDAY 25 MARCH

5.15 pm

Genome Sequences, Structural Biology and Drug Discovery: Opportunities and Challenges

Professor Sir Tom Blundell

Sir William Dunn Professor of Biochemistry

Large Haworth Lecture Theatre, The School of Chemistry

Gallery Assistants Framed for Success

Left to right:
Jo Wilson and Caroline Barrie,
the Barber Institute's full-time
Gallery Assistants



A groundbreaking gallery work bursary scheme has been paying dividends for the Barber Institute and for the art history graduates working there. Andrew Davies investigates

Visit the Barber most weekdays and, chances are, there'll be a group of schoolchildren sitting spellbound on the floor. Perhaps they'll be watching an actor bring one of the paintings to life, drawing their own version of one of the masterpieces on the wall, or

listening with rapt attention to the story of why Andre Derain, tortured by toothache, painted a portrait of Bartolomeo Savona, or hearing what Impressionism is all about.

School visits are now so popular at the Barber that it would be difficult to

fit any more into the diary, and that's mostly due to the work done by education officer Brian Scholes and the two gallery assistants, Caroline Barrie and Jo Wilson. The first paid gallery assistant was taken on for three days a week in 1995 and the scheme has gradually expanded, explains Brian, with two full-time gallery assistants taken on for the first time in September.

'Education was, and still is, of growing importance within galleries,' says Brian. 'It was also seen as an important opportunity for one of the art history students to gain some experience in educational work and in the curatorial side of things, which is of particular benefit for anyone interested in a career in museums.'

'They're invaluable as they do supply a lot of ideas and initiative – and because they're a bit younger than me, they also help make the art even more accessible to the kids.'

History of Art and History graduate Jo, and History of Art and French graduate Caroline, each spend five half-days each week in education work – leading school visits, writing the family activity guides that accompany exhibitions, and organising the Barber Open Day in June, among other duties.

They now also spend three half-days a week each carrying out curatorial work with senior curator Paul Spencer-Longhurst, researching works of art in the permanent collection and writing *Buzz's* 'Picture of the Month'. Highlight of their year is curating a small print exhibition in the Education Gallery: Jo's exhibition *Turner, Printmaking and the 'Liber Studiorum'* has just been taken down after a successful four-month run, while Caroline's show, on a sea theme, will open in June.

A further day each is spent in the Barber's press and marketing office, where recently the pair have spearheaded a vital visitor survey, written press releases and enlisted

gallery volunteers to help distribute exhibition fliers.

'I started volunteering in my first year for children's workshops and it was so much fun,' says Jo, who's Birmingham-born and is currently applying for an MA in print curating at UCL. 'I always thought I'd be rubbish with children, but it went well from the start: there's a really great atmosphere.'

'When I finished my degree I knew I wanted to work in galleries, but didn't know which path to take, so this has been ideal – there's the chance to try out three different paths.'

'One day I'm a marketing person, the next morning I'm doing research with Paul and later I'm getting covered in glue and feathers from head to toe, making 'ugly heads' with little kids.'

Caroline, whose aim is to be curator at the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence, agrees. 'I've enjoyed working with kids before, so the idea of spending a year doing it was great, but what really sold it to me was spending some time doing marketing as well. It's been invaluable experience – a bit like a foundation year.'

And the scheme has yielded its fair share of success stories for former gallery assistants. Jana Manuelpillai is now education officer at the Mall Galleries in London, while Ashley Penrose went on to become education officer at the Turner Centre in Margate and is currently waiting to hear whether he's been offered the same job at London's prestigious Courtauld Institute.

Barber Institute Director Richard Verdi adds: 'We originally instigated the scheme as our education officer was so over-stretched. A permanent assistant would probably find the job very limited, but it's ideal for a student who's just finished their course and wants to get their feet wet in museums.'

'The majority of our gallery assistants have gone on to very successful careers in museums or galleries – it really has been one of our runaway success stories.'

Communicating the Mathematics of the Future

Research from a new study by Birmingham mathematicians working with colleagues at the University of East Anglia and the Learning and Teaching Support Network claims that the teaching of mathematics could benefit from collaboration between mathematicians and researchers in mathematics education.

The fifteen-month study of teaching and learning mathematics at undergraduate level engaged mathematicians as educational co-researchers.

Twenty mathematicians from across the UK of varying rank and teaching experience were surveyed. Students' difficulties within a number of

mathematical topics were discussed by examining examples of written work and considering samples of findings from educational studies in mathematics. The discussions typically evolved into lively exchanges regarding the ways in which the lecturers support their students in overcoming these

difficulties and the ways in which educational research can help them in enhancing this support.

The mathematical community has agreed that improved communication within the discipline would benefit learners, many of whom need mathematics as a 'service' course as an element of their studies but do not choose a straight mathematics degree. The learning needs of this student population varies more than it used to, and this study attempts to address a prospect of the subjects' decline into a marginal occupation.

Dr Chris Sangwin, Research Fellow at the School of Mathematics says: 'Our research shows that mathematics professionals in the research and education fields can work together to progress the discipline towards the future. Our workshops gave time and space to ascertain what mathematics teaching is trying to achieve. Participants agreed that educational theory can be developed by tapping in to the deep experience of practicing mathematicians. By building a common language and busting jargon, research methods and findings can provide a new and credible angle to teaching mathematics in universities.'

What's on at the Barber

The BARBER
Institute of Fine Arts

Exhibitions (all admission free)

Until 9 May

Main Gallery: *The Great and the Good: Judging Quality in Art*

The gems of the Barber collection hang alongside the works kept behind the scenes in order to answer the question – 'what distinguishes the great from the merely good in art?'

Until 6 June

Print Room 1: *Works on Paper: New Acquisitions at the Barber Institute*

An opportunity to see works acquired by the Barber Institute in the last two years, ranging from pieces by Van Dyck to Whistler

Until 22 February

Education Gallery: *Turner, Printmaking and the 'Liber Studiorum'*

A small show of prints from the permanent collection compares a selection of Turner's prints with contemporary examples

27 February – 23 May

Education Gallery: *Inspired*

An exhibition of life drawing and watercolour work produced by participants in the Barber's adult art workshops, inspired by the permanent collection

Until October 2004

Coin Gallery: *Talking Coins: 1800 Years of Numismatic Treasures*

An exhibition taken from the Barber Institute's coin collection exploring the many roles of coins in Roman, Byzantine and central Asian society

Bespoke Experimental Equipment

- Pre-Commercial Visualisation Models
- Pre-Prototype Equipment
- Modifications To Existing Equipment

The Wolfson Applied Technology Laboratory in the Department of Medicine has facilities for producing specialised equipment to your requirements. From microscope accessories, to timers and temperature controlled cabinets, to tailor made stands and tables.

For further details contact John Gibbons
Tel: 0121-627-2573 Email: J.E.C.Gibbons@bham.ac.uk

Law School Welcomes Outspoken Politician



Prominent Midlands MP, Gisela Stuart (pictured), will spark further debate when she visits the School of Law this month (Feb) to speak out once more about the proposed European Constitution. The Labour MP for Edgbaston, will deliver the Institute of European Law's annual lecture: 'Writing a constitution for Europe – On balance I would rather have been in Philadelphia'.

Gisela Stuart – a former lawyer and lecturer – was one of the British parliamentary representatives on the Convention on the Future of Europe, which drew up the draft EU Constitution. Her experience of the drafting process and concerns over the contents of parts of the constitution have led her to talk strongly about its ratification.

The Constitution is designed to make the EU more accessible and responsive and to ensure that it is equipped to meet the challenge of enlargement from 15 to 25 Member States next May. Gisela has cast doubt on whether it is capable of achieving those objectives and criticised the process by which it was produced, notably in a Fabian Society pamphlet published in December '03. The future of the draft Constitution is currently uncertain following the collapse of negotiations between the Member States just before Christmas.

Partnership With NHS University Announced

The University is one of twelve academic partners nationwide in the new National Health Service University (NHSU) training scheme. We will be leading a consortium with University College Worcester and the Universities of Wolverhampton and Staffordshire to deliver new training and learning within health and social care.

Courses will be delivered through a variety of means, from face-to-face contact and work-based studies to distance and e-learning. Facilities will be developed to ensure provision and new teaching and learning methodologies will be developed. Consultancy on how to widen participation within the NHS will be available.

Wide experience across the campus and our partners will be of relevance to NHSU. The Health Services Management Centre will lead on supporting a proposed School of Leadership Management and Health Improvement. The School of Medicine runs inter-professional education for nursing and medical students; the HMSC delivers the Partnership Working in Health and Social Care programme; and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Mental Health's RECOVER programme is delivered for nurses, health visitors, psychologists and social workers.

Other areas with potential input include the Interactive Skills Unit based at the Medical School and the Centre for Lifelong Learning's counselling courses. The Institute for Applied Social Sciences, the Learning and Development Unit, CETADEL, Nursing and Health Sciences have also been involved in the successful bid.

Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Colin Rickwood says: 'The University and its collaborators have an on-going history of teaching and research, developed through significant links to a range of Trusts. We are committed to widening participation, not only within our own institutions, but also by developing educational facilities in other organisations through 'training the trainers'. This new partnership provides access to our expertise and experience, and enables us to continue to develop these valued areas of provision.'

NHSU is the new 'corporate university' for the 1.6 million staff in the NHS. It aims to open up learning and development opportunities for more than 1.2 million people who work for and with the NHS and the social care sector.

The mix of academic partners nationwide will lead to the development of new courses, learner support, teaching methods, practice and delivery. With all programmes focused on improving patient care, its initial plans include a corporate induction programme for all those joining the NHS, advanced communications for cancer care, junior scholarships to encourage 14-19 year olds into a career in healthcare, and First Contact to support healthcare professionals in effective delivery.

Outstanding Student Honoured



High flying student Tara Windsor was last month awarded the R T Jones Prize. Tara, who studies German Studies and History, was nominated by both the School of Humanities and the School of Historical Studies. She is pictured with Vice Principal Professor Michael Clarke (Left) and President of the Guild of Graduates Dr Peter Borchers. Tara said: 'I was about to start on my third essay when I found out about the award. Winning this award makes all the hard work worthwhile.'

Students Cheer for Chinese New Year



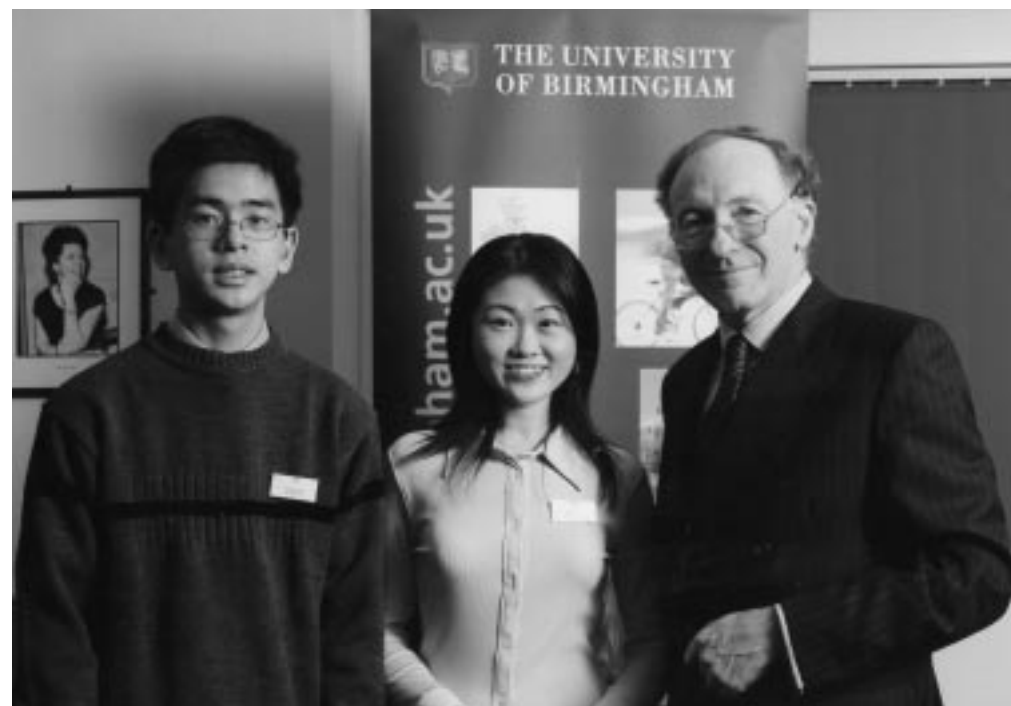
More than 500 Chinese students from the region's Universities gathered at the University to celebrate the Chinese New Year last month. Students and staff from the Universities of Birmingham, Central England and Aston marked the arrival of the 15-day Spring Festival as the 2004 Year of the Monkey was welcomed in.

The celebration featured performances of folk songs and dance, karaoke, music recitals, poem recitations and games, all performed by the students and was organised by the Birmingham Chinese Student and Scholar Association, who represent the academic communities from Birmingham's three Universities.

Special guests included officials from the Chinese Embassy in London, Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Mike Cruise, Ms Jennifer Chin, International Officer from the European and International Division of Birmingham City Council, Mr Wu Jinglun, Manager of the Birmingham branch of the Bank of China and Mr Ye Huangxing, President of the UK Chinese Society Union.

Celebrating International Success

The University has recognised the outstanding achievements of twenty-seven international students who have been granted scholarships.



Vice Principal, Professor Michael Clarke, presenting scholarships to Angeline Quek from National University of Singapore and Fung Wai Bong from Hong Kong University.

Working Together with Graduates

As the graduate marketplace becomes increasingly competitive, there is an increasing need for graduates to have evidence of quality work experience when applying for their first job. In reaction to this trend, the University is a member of a consortium of HEIs highlighting the value of work experience and promoting the West Midlands as a region in which to work. Funded by Advantage West Midlands, Graduate Advantage helps to place students and graduates in placements across the West Midlands. The team at Graduate Advantage can assist in the sourcing of placements for students; part-time, during term time and full-time during vacations and also for those who have recently graduated.

University departments, both academic and administrative can employ students or graduates to work on projects which otherwise might be left on the back burner due to lack of time and resources. A student placement was an ideal solution for Graduate Advantage in 2003 project team when they took on a student for the summer to design their training website for the Graduate Placement Programme. Jill Woodman, Project Manager said, 'We did not have the IT skills nor the resources in the team to complete the project ourselves. Our student provided a timely and cost effective solution and she was a real asset to the team'.

For more information on the scheme, visit the website at www.graduateadvantage.co.uk or call the Graduate Advantage team on 0121 359 3611 ext 5380

Vice-Principal Professor Michael Clarke hosted a reception in honour of the students at which he presented the scholarship certificates. The winners came from as far and wide as China, India, Kenya, Chile, Brazil, Thailand and Japan.

This year's reception marked the inaugural year of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarships, scholarships which are funded by the University and open only to graduates of Universitas 21 institutions. The University originally intended to grant three Queen Elizabeth Scholarships but due to the exceptionally high quality of applications, four scholarships were awarded to U21 graduates.

Two Joint Scholarships were also awarded. These awards are funded jointly by the University and our overseas representatives in South Korea and Thailand, and highlight the growing number of students from these countries who choose to study at Birmingham.

Eco-Centres Award



The University's Outdoor Pursuits and Field Studies Centre by Coniston Water has been awarded an Eco-Centre award in recognition of their achievement in working towards a sustainable lifestyle.

The entire team of staff at the Priestley Centre were involved with the process that began with an environmental audit. They then tackled areas that could be improved immediately and set targets to work on other areas. Improvements included

- Using low energy bulbs wherever appropriate
- Installing reflector panels behind radiators
- Sending ink cartridges, glass and tins for recycling
- Encouraging all centre users to use water wisely
- Creating a new purchasing policy to include products with less packaging
- Using eco-friendly products for cleaning
- Running environmental days for the local primary school

The staff at Coniston have many more ideas that they would like to implement in the future such as sun-pipes in the corridors and a wind-powered extraction system in the shower area as well as continuing to recognise the importance of environmental issues and encouraging all those who stay at the Centre to do the same.

The focus remains on the long-term nature of the scheme and the benefits it will have for the Centre, course participants and the wider community.

PARKING NOTICE SOUTH CAR PARK

There will be limited parking available in South Car Park on the following date:

25 February 2004

This is to accommodate visitors who will be attending the University Postgraduate Open Day.

We apologise for any inconvenience.

High-Profile Addresses Conclude Legal Lecture Series



Following last month's visit to the School of Law by Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer (pictured), the *Issues in Criminal Justice* series of lectures was continued with a high-profile address from acclaimed journalist and commentator, Marcel Berlins. The annual series of lectures focuses on the most pertinent and problematic issues in criminal justice today.

Marcel Berlins' lecture, entitled '*Lies, Media and Justice: Distorting the Criminal Justice System*' examined the complex relationship between the media, public opinion and government and asked the question '*Is criminal justice policy being driven by a biased media and the punitive views of a public ignorant of the real issues at stake?*'

The series was concluded by the School of Law's own Professor Stephen Shute with an insight into '*Perceptions of Fairness and Equality of Treatment: Ethnic Minorities in the Criminal Courts*'.

International Office Visits

The International Office has entered a period of intensive campaigning with all of the officers embarking on recruitment trips abroad.

The Officers will be attending recruitment exhibitions, visiting schools and universities, meeting with international agents and delivering presentations on opportunities for international students at the University. If you would like more information on forthcoming trips or feel that you would like to pass the information on to applicants who may be interested in meeting officers in person, please contact the International Office ext: 43694.

The following countries will be visited in the coming weeks:

Dates	Countries	Officers
14-20 February	Phillipines British Council exhibitions School visits + counselling	Gail Armistead
20-27 February	Mexico British Council exhibitions Mexico City/Monterrey/ Aguascalientes	Claire Dignon
20-22 February	Kenya Nairobi British Council exhibitions	Hilary Evans David Tobin
21-24 February	Iran Student counselling and Business Development	Marilyn Miles
25-29 February	Mauritius School visits/presentation Counselling visits	Hilary Evans

Letters

Sir,

Surely, a magazine such as Buzz should tell us succinctly and clearly what is going on in the University? When something changes, I hope to be told in what way – and how this might make the day-to-day work of me and my colleagues more efficient than before.

It was with this hope that I read the 'explanation' of the ongoing improvements to the internal structure of IS that occupied one-third of page 10 in the last issue. But no. I was told of changes in 'culture', 'mission', 'collective vision', 'style', 'focus' and the 'eight vision strands', all aimed at continuing 'to deliver a quality service'. There was a smattering of information about internal reorganisation, but nothing that would help anyone 'at the academic coalface' to know how or when they will benefit from this revolution.

In future, could such features please give us useful information rather than a flood of imprecise management-speak?

Bob Michell

Bob

Thank you for your comments regarding the information provided on the current change programme in Information Services. The information provided was intended to inform university colleagues of the recent change programme and how this has changed the vision of the service, whilst still ensuring we are committed to our university objectives. This information is being supplemented with further information including new divisional remits, structure charts and key contacts within the divisions as well as Information Services as a whole.

At the time of the article, information on changes to the Liaison Librarian role had been distributed to Heads of Schools and library representatives. This detailed the changes that have occurred within Learning and Research Division in relation to the new role of the Academic Support Teams. This included details of changes within teams and key contacts.

The changes that are occurring in Information and Computing Systems Division are at present being finalised, the intention is to communicate this to colleagues once we have confirmed a new structure for this division.

As you may have noticed there have been regular articles in *Buzz* featuring developments and improvements within Information Services and the services we provide. I have noted your comments and will endeavour in future articles to make sure we are providing our university colleagues with as much information as is possible.

Michele Shoebridge,
Director of Information Services

Competition • Competition

Business is the Name of the Game

Later this year, a catering outlet will open in the new Business School, which is being created on the University House site. The catering facility is adjacent to the old student dining room, which leads out onto a wonderful terrace and gardens. This facility is a result of a partnership between the Business School and HAS, and will serve speciality beverages and hot and cold snacks.

The Business School is offering a magnum of champagne to whoever can come up with a name for the facility that will reflect its presence in the Business School. Get your thinking caps on!

Please submit your entries by 6 March to Angela Perry, Hospitality and Accommodation Services – email: A.Perry@bham.ac.uk

The results will be announced in the Mid March edition of *BUZZ*

Competition • Competition

February Diary

TUESDAY 17

1.10 pm Final year recitalists: Frances Baines *soprano*; Fiona Hammerton *viola*. Admission free

4.00 pm Psychology Seminar – *The human cerebellum and associative learning* – Dagmar Timmann-Braun (Germany). Training Room 120, Psychology Hills Building

4.00 pm Chemical Biology Seminar – *Heterocyclic Peptides* – Professor Chris Moody (Exeter). Host Dr John Snaith. Room G26 Mechanical Engineering

5.00 pm Department of Sociology visiting speaker seminar – *What do ethnic minorities think about the criminal courts?* – Stephen Shute, Professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice (Birmingham). Ground floor lecture room, School of Social Sciences Building, 31 Pritchatts Road. All welcome

5.15 pm Inaugural Lecture – *Am I Russian? Reflexivity, Sociology and Cross-Cultural Research* – Professor H Pilkington. ERI Conference Room, European Research Institute. Followed by a reception in the Atrium

5.30 pm Ingleby Lecture – *Transcriptome Signatures define endometrial function* – Professor Stephen K Smith, Executive Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Glasgow. Arthur Thompson Hall, Medical School

WEDNESDAY 18

10.30 am University Women's Club – Coffee in the home of Marjorie Knight Tel: 0121 454 1098

1.00 pm Plant Genetics and Cell Biology seminar – *Mapping genes using allelic association* – Dr John Whittaker, Imperial College, School of Medicine. NG08, School of Biosciences. Host: Dr Zewei Luo

1.10pm Barber Institute Lecture – *Raising Expectations: the Manual Skills* – Richard Verdi, Director of the Barber Institute. To accompany the *The Great and the Good: Judging Quality in Art* – admission free

4.15 pm CELC Cultures in Dialogue research seminar – *Guzmán, Quijote and the Anxiety of Confluence* – Dr Bob Oakley (Birmingham). Room 214 (2nd Floor, Muirhead Tower)

4.30 pm School of Chemistry Seminar – *Chiral Lanthanide Complexes: Structure, Dynamics and Function* – Professor David Parker, FRS (Durham). Host: Dr Zoe Pikramenou. Haworth 203, Preceded by Coffee/Tea in Haworth 209a at 4.00 pm

4.30 pm Molecular Microbiology Seminar – *Chromosome integrity and the cell cycle of E.coli* – Gary Blakely, Institute of Cell and Molecular Biology (Edinburgh) LG32 – Learning Resource Centre. Host: Professor Steve Busby

7.30 pm Barber Celebrity Concert – The Schubert Ensemble. Tickets: £10, £7.50 concessions, £5 Friends, £2 students

THURSDAY 19

1.00 pm Genetic Seminar – *Insights into the biochemical and genetic basis of glucokinase activation and inactivation from naturally occurring mutations* – Anna Gloyd (Exeter). Seminar room, Clinical Genetics, Regional Genetics Laboratory.

4.00 pm School of Computer Science departmental seminar – *TBA* – Adam Kùlgarriff (Brighton). Host A Wallington

5:15pm Inaugural Lecture – *Looking At a Lot of Language* – Professor S Hunston. Arts Main Lecture Theatre, Arts Building. Followed by a reception in the SCR

FRIDAY 20

1.10 pm Barber Lunchtime Concert – University Chamber Orchestra. Conductors: Claire McIntyre and Dan Avery. Stravinsky – *Suite from Pulcinella*; Bernstein – *Fancy Free*. Admission free

MONDAY 23

1.00 pm Cancer Research UK Institute for Cancer Studies external seminar – *Vaccinia virus: egress, entry and evasion* – Dr Geoff Smith (Imperial College, London). S104, Cancer Studies. Host: Professor Alan Rickinson

TUESDAY 24

12.30 pm International Development Department Seminar – *NGOS and Advocacy, with particular reference to the Jubilee Debt Campaign* – Professor Michael Taylor, Director of the World Faiths Development Dialogue and Professor of Social Theology (Birmingham). G22, J.G. Smith Building. Limited places available. Please book your place by calling 0121 414 5038 or email idd@bham.ac.uk

1.10 pm Final year recitalists: Rachel Atkins – *flute*; Helen Lloyd *saxophone*. Admission free

5.15 pm Inaugural Lecture – *Towards Prediction of 'Pollutant' Movement in Waters in Rocks: what has been, should be, and cannot be achieved* – Professor J H Tellam (Professor of Hydrogeology). Lecture Theatre 117 Physics West. Followed by a reception in the Lapworth Museum.

WEDNESDAY 25

10.30 am University Women's Club – Coffee in the home of Wendy Sterling Tel: 0121 454 6565

1.00 pm Division of Primary Care, Public and Occupation Health Divisional Seminar – *What protection do we have from industry influence in clinical research* – Professor Nick Freemantle, Dept of Primary Care and General Practice. Room SF223-4: The Learning Centre and Primary Care Clinical Sciences Building

THURSDAY 26

1.00 pm Genetic Seminar – *17 years experience in the Manchester Breast Cancer Family History clinics* – Gareth Evans, Clinical Genetics, Manchester.

Seminar room, Clinical Genetics, Regional Genetics Laboratory.

4.00 pm School of Computer Science departmental seminar – *Grid Middleware: Dressing the Emperor!* – Gordon Blair (Lancaster). Host: B Bordbar

5.15 pm Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek seminar – *The sacred Arsenal of Andronikos Kamateros and the Primacy of Rome* – Alessandra Bucossi (Oxford). The Whitting Room (436), Faculty of Arts

FRIDAY 27

1.10 pm Final year recitalists: Stephanie Oatridge *oboe*; Helen Mills *piano*. Admission free

SUNDAY 29

3.00 pm UMS Concert – *Celli*. Tickets: £4, £2.50 concessions

BUZZ Deadlines

Early March	
Deadline:	16.02.04
Publication date:	
March (mid month)	
Deadline:	02.03.04
Publication date:	17.03.04

A full list of **BUZZ** deadlines and publication dates will be published next month. Watch this space for updates.

Day Elms Nursery Shows Golden Quality



Lesley Adams, Toni Ibbitson, Chris Hemmings, Gill Ullah, Tasmin Butt and Sarah lock of The Elms Day Nursery are pictured with their complete set (Gold, Silver and Bronze) of Growing together Quality Awards. The Nursery's Gold status is valid until the end of 2005 and is recognised by local authorities such as Worcestershire, Telford, Wrekin, Shrewsbury, Dudley and Herefordshire.

Polishing Postgraduate Personal Skills

In May, the University will run the first of its own Personal Skills Courses for PhD students, building on the success of the similar course run in September 2002 by the external organisation Gill Pullan Associates.

Made possible by a mixture of financial support from the Graduate School and the work and enthusiasm of staff in the Careers Centre, Staff Development Unit and Biological Sciences, the new course will be run by an experienced Director provided by UK Grad, assisted by Celia Popovic (SDU), Clare Wright (Careers Centre) and Chris Thomas (Biosciences), along with tutors and mentors drawn from across the University.

The course is aimed at postgraduate research students from all subject areas and is scheduled for 7 - 9 May in the Chamberlain Museum in the Medical School. The course will be free to all attendees. It will focus on key skills that postgraduate students need to get the most out of their study and to subsequently be successful in their future careers.

We are keen to involve staff of the University in this initiative as both tutors and mentors. Tutors draw on their experience, knowledge and skills to support participants to achieve the planned outcomes. More specifically this involves:

- Providing information, guidance and advice
- Leading and supporting the course team in the delivery of planned exercises and activities
- Sharing responsibility for the achievement of the planned learning outcomes of the course
- Sharing responsibility for the health and safety of all participants
- Encouraging mentors to provide support for participants to gain maximum benefit from the course

Mentors are likely to be less experienced than tutors but more experienced than participants; providing support by drawing on their own experience, knowledge and skills in providing information, guidance and advice.

Full training will be provided prior to the course. If you would be interested in joining the course team either as a tutor or a mentor, please contact Clare Wright ext: 46343

Email: C.Wright@bham.ac.uk

Exclusive Reader Offer I

Charge through Chaucer! Dash through Dickens! From Jane Austen to Jeffrey Archer the RSC will rifle through your bookshelves and ask questions such as: Why was Oliver so much better at the Twist than the Jive? Why does Homer wear such big pants? How much does a Greek urn? And who was afraid of Virginia Woolf? Chuck out your chalkboards, start making notes and let the RSC – in one hysterical evening – save you a lifetime of reading.

The Reduced Shakespeare Company's *All the Great Books – Abridged* is a high speed, roller-coaster type condensation of the complete works of great literature and is not recommended for people with heart ailments, back problems, English degrees, inner ear disorders and/or people inclined to motion sickness. The RSC show you everything you ever wanted to read but couldn't be bothered!

The Birmingham Hippodrome is offering **BUZZ** readers tickets for two performances of *All the Great Books – Abridged* (26 Feb at 7.30pm and 28 Feb at 2.30pm) at £10.00 each – Maximum 4 tickets per person.

To take advantage of this offer quote *Birmingham University offer* when booking over the phone on 0870 7301234 (booking fees apply).

Staff News



Congratulations to Professor Ted Forgan (pictured, right) who recently joined the ranks of eminent international physicists honoured by the Institute of Physics, when he was awarded the Mott Medal and Prize for his outstanding contribution to condensed matter physics. The Institute of Physics' President David Wallace presented Professor Forgan, Head of Condensed Matter Research at the University's School of Physics and Astronomy, with the silver medal and £1,000 prize at a prestigious dinner held at the Savoy in London. Professor Forgan was honoured in particular for

his influential work on the study of vortices in superconductors using small angle neutron scattering and muon spin rotation.

Commenting on the award, Professor Forgan said, *'I would like to dedicate this award to my team of postgraduate students and fellow academics, both past and present, some of whom were able to join me at the awards ceremony to share in the celebration of their contributions – I am delighted that our work has been recognised by the Institute of Physics. I would also like to pay tribute to our collaborators at the large-scale research establishments in Europe, who provide Birmingham academics the opportunity to carry out world-leading research.'*

Congratulations to Law's Julian Lombay who was recently made Chair of the Working Group on Legal Services by the CCBE (Council of Bars and Law Societies of the EU). The position was set up to respond to the new proposed EC framework services directive, for the European legal professions.

Exclusive Reader Offer II

We have teamed up with the Birmingham Rep to bring you this special offer. BUZZ readers can get 2 tickets for the price of 1 to see *Forward*, a new play by Robert Warrington, for performances 16-21 February.

Tickets cost £9.75 and the offer is subject to availability and not available with any other discount.

To take advantage of this offer call the box office on 0121 236 4455 and quote *'Buzz Reader Offer'*.

Playwriting Graduate Debuts at the Door

Graduate of the University's MA in Playwriting Studies Robert Warrington's debut play *Forward* opened at The Door this month and runs until February 28. The play was inspired by honorary graduand Raymond Mason's *Forward* sculpture that was situated in Centenary Square until it was destroyed by arson last Easter.

Forward tells the story a working class Birmingham family and their attempts to come to terms with its past, present and future. The cast includes Joanne

Moseley who was recently nominated for Newcomer of the Year in the *What's On Stage Awards* and Robin Pirongs who has previously been taken parts at Bath Theatre Royal, Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the New Vic Theatre, Stoke. Directing *Forward* is Natalie Wilson whose production of Brighton Beach Memoirs at Oldham Coliseum was nominated for Best Production at the *Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards* last year.

Buzz on the Streets

We're constantly cleansing our data and updating our records. Please let Sam (below) know if you want extra copies of Buzz or if you think we need to amend your distribution details.

Printed Version

Publication Date: 01 March 2004

Deadline: 16 February 2004

Please send all your items for the web or print versions to the Public Relations Office (1st floor Aston Webb), by the rotunda) by email, post or why not in person? We'd enjoy meeting you!

Please note the next edition of *Buzz* will be a bumper edition covering December and January. If you have any news or dates that you would like included in this edition please let us know ASAP.

Views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the University or a statement of University policy. The publication of advertisements does not imply any endorsement by the University of the goods or services advertised. All submissions may be subject to editing. The Editor's decision is final.

News, Views, Pictures

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Small Ads

University members:
£5.00 for up to twenty words

Non members:
£10 for up to twenty words
Payment in advance required.

Display Ads

Ratecard available on request.

Small Ads

New Holiday Home To Let. 2-Bedroom villa in complex + pool. Near beach. Southern Costa Blanca. Details – Chris 01564 783976

Large cheerfully furnished room in quiet house off Harborne High Street. Walking distance University/easy access city centre. £300 pcm (inclusive). Phone 0121 427 4568/07817 846058

2 bed terraced house for sale in Selly Park. Central Heating, double glazing, alarm plus many other items included £129,950. Email: A.M.Perry@bham.ac.uk

Moseley. Beautifully refurbished furnished house. Suit Professional. Lounge/diner, new kitchen, 2 bedrooms. £550 pcm excl. Julia Stanley 01564 795 669, 07811 255 931

South Lakes – lovely 2 bedroom holiday cottage in secluded rural location, ideal for couples or families. www.firkincottage.co.uk Tel: 07787 824462

Relax in the Quantocks – cosy, self contained, period accommodation in village centre. Choice of 3; sleep 2 / 3 / 4. Private parking. Tel 01278 732 392. www.theoldhouse.ision.co.uk

Wanted: Part time housing coordinator/counselor for American student programme on the Selly Oak campus. Employer is the University of Minnesota. Contact umd@bham.ac.uk or 0121-415-8444

Moss Roofing. Built-Up Felt Roofing Specialists – Sprung a leak? Tel: 07739 553574. UPVC Fascias, Soffits. All work guaranteed

The Suite Hospital. Is your suite under the weather, got a saggy bottom? Tel: 07866973011. Also curtains and soft furnishings

Gold Schaeffer fountain-pen, of special significance, lost during the year. Please return (anonymously) to Philip Seddon, Department of Theology

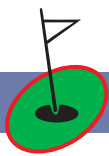
Tax return still in the in-tray? Mynette & Co (est 1976) offer a local, personalised accountancy/tax advisory service. Call 0121 449 7322 or email: ajm@kinvara.fsnet.co.uk

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Car for sale. Reliable, fun and nippy. Metallic blue 1989 Fiesta XR2 (1.6 ltr engine). 83,000 miles, full service history. £500 on. Jo Aitken on 0121 414 7526 or J.Aitken@bham.ac.uk

Visit the Tuscan seaside. Two bedroom apartment in Porto Santo Stefano, beauty spot on the Tuscan coastline, in a residence with swimming pool, paddling pool, tennis court and olive gardens. Spectacular private views over town and sea. Sandy and rocky beaches near. Medieval towns for art, wine and hot springs. £500/week. Discount for longer. Dr Olson 0121 414 3328 Email: A.L.O.Olson@bham.ac.uk



Top Team Performance *in the Pool*



The University's swim team put in a heroic performance at the 7th annual Brierly Hill Open meet set four new club records in the process.

Performances of particular note included; Tim Watts, who made a welcome return to form coming 2nd in the mens 50m butterfly in a new club record time of 27.1 seconds; Sarah Noctor who won the 200m event in a new club record time of 2.32.6, taking more than a second off the previous record and Richard Jellyman who

won two backstroke races: the 50m, by over a body length in 28.66s; and the 200m in a new club record time of 2.12.8, taking 5s off the old record. In the women's backstroke, 4 of the 8 finalists were Birmingham students,

with Michelle Thornton and Caroline Williams picking up medals. In the 50m breaststroke event, Pete Ross showed he was back on top form following a long layoff due to injury, taking 2nd place with a lifetime best performance of 26.10s. Diana Steele won the 400m in a new club record of 4.35.02.

The day's successes were topped only by the announcement of the results in the top team competition where Birmingham had managed pick up second place despite only having swimmers in one of the four age groups.

Birmingham Promoted to Indoor Hockey National League

The University Hockey Club last month secured qualification for the Indoor National League.

The Midlands round of qualification was held in December in Kidderminster where the University teams competed against the best clubs in the region. The team were unbeaten in their pool games and went on to win a closely fought semi final against Belper HC before meeting Worcester in the final where they dominated the game to win 2 - 1.

As overall winners, the University team went on to represent the region in the National Playoff, held at East Grinstead in January.

In the day of round robin competition between the five regions Birmingham produced an impressive 100% record against some very tough teams. Qualification to the National League is an amazing achievement considering that prior to the event the team were not able to train indoors. In January 2005, over two weekends, the University team will be competing against eight other teams in Division One. In two years they could be in European competition.

University to Host Annual Coaches Conference

Sports coaches from the region will visit the University to attend the annual Birmingham Coaches Conference on Sunday 28 March.

The keynote speech will focus on long-term athlete development and will be followed by sessions on speed, agility and quickness (SAQ), cultural and religious issues and sport psychology.

The cost of the day is £20 including refreshments and lunch.

To book contact Jane Meer. Email: jane_meer@birmingham.gov.uk

Tel: 0121 4646053

If you would like to find out more about becoming a qualified coach in any sport contact the Foundation for Sport's Performance Services Officer Richard Gwyn

Ext: 47678

Email: R.H.Gwyn@bham.ac.uk

Pay As You Go

If you're a member of the Munrow Centre, you can now join most aerobics, dance and studio-cycling classes on a pay as you go basis, until the end of term. If you don't have time to commit to a class every week you can now come along to classes you can make and pay per session. Prices are from £2.50 per class (pay at the Munrow Reception before the class starts).

For students who aren't members of the Munrow there is also a special offer of £1-off per class.

For further details, see www.sport.bham.ac.uk

or contact the ALP administrator, Amy Cleeton, Ext: 43781
Email: A.E.Cleeton@bham.ac.uk

Squash Stars Come to Munrow

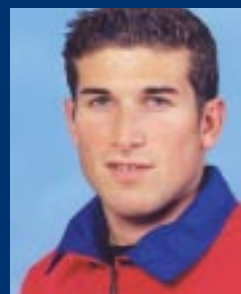
The Munrow Sports Centre will be hosting the squash stars of the very near future when they compete in the BUSA Championships this month (27-29 February). Why not come along and see how the top players do it? There's comfortable seating with great views of the courts, entrance is free and all are welcome. The semi-finals will be on Saturday afternoon and the men's and women's finals on Sunday lunchtime. For a full timetable see www.sport.bham.ac.uk

Munrow Charity Week

Don't forget the Munrow Charity Week 16-21 February. All proceeds from the week's events will go towards raising £2500 towards a mobile mammogram for the Women's Hospital. There really is something for everyone, from having your car washed to challenging yourself in gym, getting a quick health check to joining in the aerobathon, plus lots of other activities during the week.

See www.sport.bham.ac.uk for all the details.

Spotlight on Scholars



Cedric Le Quere

Cedric is in his first year of a degree in Commerce. He has come from Andresy in France as an international triathlete, having finished 10th at the European Under 23 championships last year. Cedric hopes to compete at the World Triathlon championships in Madeira in May, alongside team mate and fellow scholar, Michael Cornes.



Dave Massam

Dave was BUSA Gymnastics individual champion last year. In addition to this, he is senior mens British rings champion. Dave is in his second year of a degree in Sport and Exercise Sciences and narrowly missed out on going to the World University Games in Daegu, Korea last summer. His goal is to compete in the next World University Games to be held in Turkey in 2005.



Alison McAllister

Alison is in the middle of her first year of a degree in Sport and Exercise Sciences. She is the reigning English Schools triple jump champion, and trains alongside World Indoor triple jump champion Ashia Hansen at the Birmingham High Performance Centre, Alexander Stadium. The standard of triple jump at Birmingham is second to none with Phil Ferdinand, BUSA indoor and outdoor champion, and Emily Parker, ranked 5th at UK senior level.

• • PREMIERSHIP SHIRT RAFFLE WINNERS • •



Congratulations to Everton season ticket holder **Mark Giannasi** of Speke, Liverpool, who won the signed Everton shirt in the Munrow Centre's recent fundraising raffle. Mark who works in Runcorn, bought his winning ticket from a colleague whose son is a student at the University. Congratulations also go out to **Lee Washburn** of Northwich, Cheshire, who won the signed Manchester United shirt.

Thank you to everybody who bought tickets for the raffles. We raised over £700, which will go towards additional coaching for the University's Football Club.