

# bbk



## LONDON

**Birkbeck during World War One**

**The Lord Mayor on the  
College and the City**

**Digital Dickens**

**The Renaissance in the capital**

**BIRKBECK'S MAGAZINE  
REVIEW 2014  
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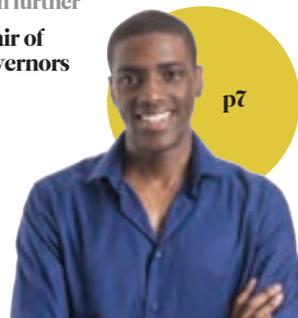
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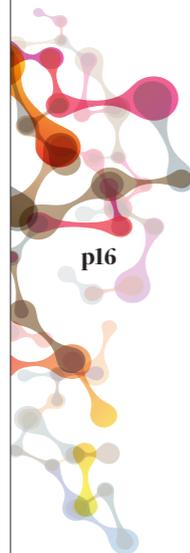
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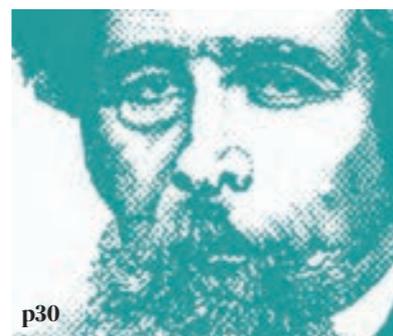


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If my donation can make a little difference, bring comfort or simply peace of mind, and help one more Birkbeck student to reach graduation, I will feel privileged.  
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## A celebration of London life



The marriage between Birkbeck and London is strong and successful. In good times and in bad, from boom time to wartime, the College and the capital have remained loyal to each other and have thrived. 2014 was no exception as our staff, students and alumni worked with organisations and individuals across the metropolis to support George Birkbeck's ideals and advance evening higher education for busy Londoners. For these reasons, and because 85% of our students are Londoners, it seems appropriate to dedicate this issue of *BBK to London* – Birkbeck's home, one of our greatest assets, and one of the greatest cities in the world. Our connections with the history and future of London life resonate throughout these pages.

From its beginnings at the Crown and Anchor Tavern on the Strand in 1823, the heart of the College has only moved a couple of miles and has never left the capital. The London Mechanics' Institute, as Birkbeck was known in those days, was based at Southampton Buildings in Chancery Lane from 1825. Breems Buildings in Fetter Lane was the home of the Birkbeck Literary and Scientific Institution from 1885, and in 1952 Birkbeck College moved to Malet Street.

Birkbeck's reach has also expanded eastwards recently thanks to the opening

in 2013 of University Square Stratford. The £33m campus is contributing to the further regeneration of an area transformed by the Olympics, and our presence in east London has led to an exciting corporate partnership with ArcelorMittal. The steel and mining company behind the distinctive ArcelorMittal Orbit sculpture is funding scholarships at Birkbeck (pp8-9).

Drawing on material from Birkbeck's archives, an article about World War One (pp48-49) demonstrates the resilience of the College and its community during tough times. Staff assisted and taught Belgian refugees in London, while other Birkbeckians gained battlefield honours from fighting overseas. Other articles encourage you to engage with our research, including looking for everyday clues to life in seventeenth-century London (pp26-27), and reading the online serialisation of *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens (pp30-31). The Lord Mayor of London, who is also the Vice-President of Birkbeck, discusses the College's role in the capital and his own role as "salesman for the City" (p10). Moreover, Claude Moraes, alumnus and Labour MEP for London, describes how studying at Birkbeck has helped shape his political career (p46).

As ever, *BBK* celebrates the achievements of our community. Articles about our students, staff, Fellows and alumni make for inspiring reading, and are the lifeblood of the magazine. They led to *BBK* issue 31 winning a 2014 Silver Circle of Excellence Award in the annual magazine category of an international competition organised by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

If you would like to share your story or thoughts about the magazine, please do get in touch.

Guy Collender, Editor

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ofLondon

# Master's report



Professor David Latchman CBE

The academic year 2013–2014 witnessed the blossoming of many initiatives at Birkbeck, and was an important year for both student recruitment and research.

Our achievements, especially the growth of our three-year undergraduate degrees taught in the evenings, were widely recognised. Birkbeck was shortlisted for the *Times Higher Education* magazine's prestigious University of the Year 2014 award, and our students voted us number one for student satisfaction in London in the National Student Survey.

The strength of Birkbeck's research was also applauded, and the College achieved impressive results in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) – an audit of the quality of research carried out in the UK higher education sector. Above all, while foresight and innovation continue to drive the College's strategy to adapt to the ever-changing higher education sector, Birkbeck remains true to its original mission of providing evening university education for working Londoners.

Recent increases in student recruitment remain central to Birkbeck's successes. Our intensive three-year undergraduate degrees, offered through UCAS, continue to thrive, with enrolments rising by an impressive 335% between 2011–2012 and 2013–2014. The trend is also encouraging for postgraduate recruitment, as applications and enrolments are up significantly after a difficult couple of years. There is soaring demand for combining evening studies with work, family and other commitments.

This focused way of learning attracts a special type of student: one who is dedicated to their studies and determined to improve themselves. That's why studying at Birkbeck is both intense and enjoyable – and why it changes people's lives.

The year 2013–2014 also marked a turning point in the College's finances as, for the first time, more tuition fee income was received from three-year undergraduate students (£7.52m) than from part-time students studying over four years or more (£5.16m). This development is significant, as student fees and student recruitment-related funding generate 70% of Birkbeck's income.

The rise of three-year degrees has more than compensated for the decline in part-time student numbers at Birkbeck. Part-time student numbers have declined by 45% at Birkbeck since the government's withdrawal of funding and the threefold increase in tuition fees in 2012. From being the institution in England most negatively affected by the major sector-wide changes in 2012 to becoming the institution with the biggest growth in UCAS recruitment in 2013, Birkbeck has experienced a remarkable transformation. However, the fall in part-time student



numbers means that students who could benefit from part-time study at Birkbeck are not taking up the opportunity of doing so. The College remains committed to such potential part-time students and was one of the main supporters of Part-Time Matters, a national campaign, backed by an alliance of universities, business and unions, to promote the benefits of part-time study.

As well as attracting students because of its evening teaching, Birkbeck's research-intensive environment is vital for student recruitment, particularly at postgraduate level. The College's REF results, released in December 2014, were admirable. Birkbeck performed very well in a number of subject areas, particularly Psychological Sciences, rated fifth in the UK, and Earth Sciences and Biosciences, rated sixth and 11th respectively. This recognition from academic peers is the

culmination of years of hard work. Following rigorous internal (and in some cases external) assessment, more than 80% of Birkbeck's eligible academics (that's over 350 people) were included in the REF submission made at the end of November 2013.

The College is also taking action to support the next generation of researchers. Last year, Birkbeck awarded 22 Anniversary Scholarships to support PhD students, and a further round of College-funded PhD studentships will open for applications shortly, this time with a particular emphasis on interdisciplinary and collaborative themes.

Birkbeck's researchers gained many accolades in 2013–2014 for their contributions to generating new knowledge, and the College has secured many prestigious and valuable research

grants (see pp 12–13). In addition, £600,000 of funding was received from the Wellcome Trust for Birkbeck to invest in strategic areas of importance and in public understanding of research.

These are exciting times for Birkbeck, especially as there are many opportunities to work in London with like-minded partners to realise the benefits of higher education. In 2016, *The Guardian* will launch Guardian Space and reopen the Midland Goods Shed at London King's Cross as a hub for events, activities and courses, with Birkbeck as a key educational partner in this initiative.

The last two centuries have been eventful for Birkbeck and I have no doubt that our future will be as challenging and rewarding as our past. The year 2015 brings with it the removal of government controls on the number of full-time undergraduate students we can admit and the first cohort of new graduates with £27,000 of tuition fee debt, who will be looking for cost-effective methods of postgraduate study.

Beyond 2015, plans are already afoot for our 200th anniversary in 2023. There are many ways in which moving towards our third century may act as a catalyst for a range of interesting initiatives. In the years ahead, Birkbeck will remain ready to respond to the new opportunities and challenges that are certain to appear in the evolving higher education landscape.

Top right: A PhD student at a Birkbeck graduation ceremony

Right: Artist's impression of *The Guardian*'s new Midland Goods Shed (Bennett Associates)

Left: Some of the recipients of Anniversary Scholarships. Left to right: Isabella Nizza, Dionysios Mitropoulos and Michael Boampong



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Birkbeck was shortlisted for the *Times Higher Education* magazine's prestigious University of the Year 2014 award, and our students voted us number one for student satisfaction in London in the National Student Survey.



# From crisis to modelling the future of higher education

## Birkbeck's three-year degrees go from strength to strength

Birkbeck's three-year intensive undergraduate degree programmes, which have been offered at the College since 2010, have shown strong growth for the fourth consecutive year. The three-year degrees offer students the opportunity to graduate in the same timeframe as those at traditional daytime universities, but with the distinct advantage that they can combine their study with work and internships. Since 2012, when tuition fees were increased due to the removal of government funding, the numbers of part-time students on Birkbeck's four-year courses have fallen dramatically, and the intensive programmes have enabled the College to survive this

challenging period. The College has also demonstrated that it remains true to its mission to make higher education accessible to all those who can benefit from its transformative power: 56% of the three-year students are from a black or minority ethnic background, 42% are in receipt of financial support and, while an unprecedented 30% are now school leavers, 70% are still mature learners.

Tricia King, Pro-Vice-Master Strategic Engagement and Recruitment and Director of External Relations, said: "When considering how to respond to the challenge we faced in 2012, the College never lost sight of our original mission of making higher education accessible to everyone who can benefit from it. We're extremely proud that as our student numbers grow, we're still attracting non-traditional students in large numbers, and are able to offer them the flexibility, study support and financial support that they require to succeed and to transform their lives through higher education."

In August 2014, the College was shortlisted for the prestigious *Times Higher Education* magazine's University of the Year 2014 award, in recognition of the success of the College's response to the fall in part-time numbers. The College's award entry highlighted the fact that not only have three-year intensive evening degrees saved the College, but their success and popularity at Birkbeck could lead to changes across the higher education sector as other institutions seek ways to provide the flexibility that today's students want.

The 2013-2014 undergraduate cohort saw 60% of students on three-year programmes, as opposed to just 5% in 2011. This represents a 1200% increase in the number of students choosing to study in this intensive mode, thanks to an increase in the number of programmes offered over three years from 5 to 46. In 2015, over 70 undergraduate degrees will be offered in the three-year format.

Isabelle Portier, Birkbeck's Head of Marketing and Recruitment, said: "The

benefits of our unique approach are widely recognised by both our students and their employers. Increasingly we're seeing students of all ages and levels of experience wanting to benefit from flexible study which enables them to build their professional experience alongside academic study. We expect to see numbers on these courses continue to grow."

As the number of students completing degrees in the same timeframe as full-time students increases, the College has continued to highlight the importance of part-time study and the fact that, across England, numbers have fallen drastically. The courses most affected appear to have been short, entry-level undergraduate courses, which often served as a route into higher education for the least confident students, who would be unlikely to enter university via other routes. These programmes enable students to build intellectual confidence and work towards undertaking a full degree. A Birkbeck briefing document highlighting the importance of these courses was sent to policy-makers and politicians in June 2014.

King concluded: "We are delighted that Birkbeck's three-year programmes have proved so popular, particularly with non-traditional students. Once again this unique and remarkable

institution has weathered a crisis and worked out how to survive and thrive with our mission intact and our future secure."



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## Birkbeck gives you that edge.

Michael Peltier, 22 (left), chose Birkbeck's three-year degree in BSc Accounting because he wanted to kick-start his career by working and studying at the same time. He is successfully combining his evening studies with daytime work at a hedge fund and is eager to graduate as soon as possible.

He said: "I am already seeing the fantastic benefits of studying and working simultaneously, and this intensive approach will help me in the job market in future. Many of my friends are struggling to find good jobs, but I know I will not be in that position. When I graduate, I'll have great prospects ahead of me, with an internationally recognised degree, a job in my chosen field, and three years of valuable and relevant experience from the workplace. It's very competitive out there, and Birkbeck gives you that edge on graduation."

# Corporate partnerships fund scholarships and transform lives

A new focus on corporate philanthropy is leading to a win-win situation for students, Birkbeck and major companies

Things happen when universities and businesses combine forces. Expertise, resources and ideas are shared, research is generated, and innovative solutions and new companies are formed. For example, the internet giant Google began life as a research project at Stanford University, and many other technology companies, including Hewlett-Packard and Yahoo, can trace their roots back to the same university campus. Closer to home, some 1,500 companies, including spinouts (based on intellectual property produced in universities) and start-ups (created by university staff and recent graduates), have emerged from UK universities and research institutes since 2000, according to The Spinouts UK Survey.

Birkbeck is no stranger to working with business, and staff have recently intensified their efforts to work with firms to generate new research and support students. Three major schemes are underway (see below) and more corporate partnerships are expected to be signed in the coming months.

## Good Energy PhD studentship: researching renewable energy

One recent leading collaboration involves Birkbeck and Good Energy – the 100% renewable electricity supplier. As part of a four-year initiative, Good Energy is funding a PhD studentship to address some of the most pressing environmental issues of the day.

Marit Stromberg (pictured right) was selected for the studentship and began her research at the College in autumn 2013. She is now analysing the potential of solar and wind resources to meet future rising energy demands at an EU level as part of her studies in the Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies.

Juliet Davenport OBE, who is the CEO and founder of Good Energy, is enthusiastic about this pioneering partnership between industry and her alma mater, where she studied for an MSc in Economics (1992–1994). The Birkbeck alumna said: “It’s great to hear how far Marit

is progressing with her work, particularly her research into the best renewable ‘mix’ and how solar and wind power can make a substantial contribution to our overall energy needs. Good Energy has always believed that renewables offer a better long-term solution to our energy requirements, and Marit’s research will help us identify the most effective type of wind and solar developments.”

## Santander scholarships and travel bursaries

Scholarships are also at the heart of Birkbeck’s other corporate agreements. Santander – one of the world’s biggest banks – has committed nearly £150,000 to Birkbeck by 2017 to fund scholarships and travel bursaries as part of its Santander Universities initiative, which supports higher education at more than 1,100 institutions across the globe.

The first Santander scholars – all from South America – began their studies at Birkbeck in autumn 2014. Michael Losada, from Colombia, is studying for an MSc in Marketing Communications. For the past seven years he has worked at the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation. Mr Losada said: “Receiving the Santander Scholarship – as well as being a really big help financially – is an acknowledgement of my commitment to working towards improving the lives of coffee producers. It is really important to me that my aim and plans in this area have been acknowledged in this way.”

## ArcelorMittal: widening access to higher education

Another major donation to Birkbeck in the last year has been received from ArcelorMittal – the world’s leading steel and mining company. Both the College and the company

**Main image:** The distinctive 114.5m high ArcelorMittal Orbit sculpture in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, east London (ArcelorMittal Orbit stock)  
**Below:** Marit Stromberg, who was awarded the Good Energy PhD studentship



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Three major corporate partnerships are underway and more corporate partnerships are expected to be signed in the coming months.

are committed to widening access to higher education in east London and the partnership complements their existing projects in this part of the capital.

Birkbeck is playing its part by providing evening study opportunities to meet the growing aspirations of the people of east London at University Square Stratford – its £33m state-of-the-art campus shared with the University of East London in Stratford. ArcelorMittal is also contributing to regeneration in the area via a range of local community initiatives and the distinctive 114.5m high ArcelorMittal Orbit sculpture (pictured), designed by Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

ArcelorMittal’s three-year gift to Birkbeck is paying for four undergraduate student bursaries, tuition fees for one postgraduate student, and support for a student researching a PhD in crystallography – the study of atomic and molecular structures. To qualify for the support, the students have to live in east London and their household income must be less than £25,000.

Ian Loudon, Head of Brand at ArcelorMittal, said: “We want the striking ArcelorMittal Orbit to be seen not just as a memory of an amazing Olympic Games but also as a beacon for the regeneration of east London which was an inherent part of London’s bid to the International Olympic Committee. Our support for low-income, locally based students at the Stratford campus of Birkbeck is part of our community engagement programme focused on this regeneration objective.”

The partnership with ArcelorMittal also extends beyond financial support. Birkbeck will host an event at the prestigious ArcelorMittal Orbit to promote its three-year undergraduate degrees, all taught in the evenings, to leaders from local schools and further education colleges in spring 2015. Corporate partnerships have a promising future at Birkbeck. In the years ahead, sponsored students will generate their own research and develop their own ideas, and synergies between the College and companies are destined to grow and prosper.

Listen to podcast interviews with Ian Loudon and the ArcelorMittal scholarship students at: [www.bbk.ac.uk/birkbeckvoices/episode27](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/birkbeckvoices/episode27)

# The Lord Mayor of the City of London



The new Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alan Yarrow, talks to *BBK* about the Square Mile and being the Vice-President of Birkbeck

The Lord Mayor of London automatically becomes the Vice-President of Birkbeck during his or her one-year term of office. In November 2014, Alan Yarrow – a distinguished financier and alderman – became the Lord Mayor of London. He told *BBK* what Birkbeck means to him, and also explained his role as “salesman for the City”.

### What is your reaction to becoming Vice-President of Birkbeck?

I am honoured to be taking up the position of Vice-President at Birkbeck. The greatest assets that we have in the City, and wider London, are the very people who work and live here. Making sure that we have world-class education providers, like Birkbeck, offering opportunities for people to challenge themselves in an intellectually demanding environment is essential to the long-term success of the UK.

### What is the role of Birkbeck in the capital?

By providing opportunities to study for students from diverse social and educational backgrounds, Birkbeck offers an inclusive and challenging environment for those wanting to learn and acquire new skills. In fact I am particularly keen on Birkbeck since your Master, Professor David Latchman CBE, advises the City of London Corporation on the fantastic Mansion House Scholarship scheme, which supports overseas students studying at British universities.

### Given your distinguished career at Kleinwort Benson and your chairmanship of prominent financial organisations, including the London Investment Banking Association, what advice would you give to students planning to establish careers in the City?

My advice would be to throw yourself into whatever area of work you have an interest in, meet as many new people as possible and bring an infectious enthusiasm with you every day. Those attributes, combined with hard work and dedication, will mean students see first-hand how the City offers up so many possibilities and opportunities.

### Could you please summarise the role of the Lord Mayor?

My role is to act as an ambassador for the City and promote it as the leading financial centre in the world. I champion not just the Square Mile, but the whole of UK plc, as the number one destination to do business. I am able to pull the right people into the right meetings – presidents, prime ministers, governors of central banks and finance ministers.

### Travel is an integral part of your role as the global ambassador for the City. What are your travel plans for 2015?

I’m going to spend around 100 days overseas, so it is going to be a busy time. This will take in India, China, the Gulf, South America, South East Asia, and Central and South America to name but

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**Making sure that we have world-class education providers like Birkbeck is essential to the long-term success of the UK.**

a few. There is also an extensive domestic schedule set up as well, where I will be visiting a number of towns and cities across the UK, including Manchester, Liverpool, Bournemouth, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

### What are you most looking forward to during your year as Lord Mayor?

As the 687th person to hold the position of Lord Mayor of the City, I will be following a long and illustrious list of predecessors. Being part of that tradition and history is something I will really enjoy.

With my background in investment banking I’m also looking forward to taking on the role of salesman for the City. I will look to do all I can to help the world’s leading financial district go from strength to strength.

But I also want to make this the year of the volunteer: celebrating the City workers who create wealth, give time and support people. In addition, being able to support two charities close to my and my family’s heart – Scope and Mencap – is something that I am thrilled about. They will be the main beneficiaries of my Appeal and I have a jam-packed programme of events and opportunities to help raise funds. My hope is that we raise over £1.5m for this year’s Appeal, which is an ambitious but achievable target.

### What is your favourite aspect of the Lord Mayor’s show?

The show has often been described as the oldest street party in the world and being able to soak up the atmosphere and lead what is a real spectacle is a real privilege. However, the one area that I am incredibly proud of is how the whole day comes together through the hard work and enthusiasm of the 7,000 volunteers who help make the day special. They are the true stars of the show and the ones who make it the success that it is.

For more information about The Lord Mayor of the City of London, visit: [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

## Education on the high street



From our first Pop-Up University to discounts for trade unionists, Birkbeck is inspiring communities to learn

In 1823, Dr George Birkbeck founded the London Mechanics’ Institute (which later became Birkbeck) to educate working people. His radical initiative enabled artisans and craftsmen to learn about science, art and economics. Today, Birkbeck remains true to its original mission, and many projects are underway to encourage hard-to-reach groups to think about studying at university.

### Pop-Up University

Birkbeck’s Pop-Up University activities exemplify the College’s commitment to attracting new students. Drawing inspiration from the trend for short-term pop-up retail spaces, Birkbeck decided to set up shop in north-west London. Willesden Green was chosen as a suitable location, because of the high numbers of Birkbeck alumni living in the area (769 alumni live in postcode areas NW2, NW6 and NW10), and because deprivation levels in the London Borough of Brent are among the highest in the country. Only 33% of the local population have a degree or a higher-level qualification.

As part of the collaboration with the Willesden Green Town Team, a shop in Queens Parade, NW2, was transformed into a drop-in centre and classroom. During its three-month existence in spring 2014, some 35 Birkbeck academics delivered 80 talks and workshops at the Pop-Up University. Each week the events covered a different theme, including community, technology, science, money and politics. Popular sessions included workshops about happiness and well-being (led by David Tross), a discussion

about London’s housing crisis (led by Dr Paul Watt), and talks referring to local history, including one (led by Dr Alex Colas) on the Great Grunwick Strike of 1976–1978, which started in a film processing plant in Willesden. In total, 650 people registered for the events and many more visited to learn about Birkbeck.

This success was repeated in summer 2014, as the Pop-Up University moved for three weeks to Leytonstone Library, in partnership with Waltham Forest Borough Council. In 2015, the Pop-Up University will take up residence in Enfield from April to June as part of a collaboration with Enfield Council and local colleges.

Annette McCone, Widening Access Manager at Birkbeck, said: “The Pop-Up University concept is really working. It is a powerful way of introducing the passion and expertise of Birkbeck’s academics to local residents and it is helping to transform futures. We have also learnt a great deal about how to target hard-to-reach groups, which can be challenging.”

### Working with the trade unions

The year 2014 was also significant for outreach work because it saw the renewal of a three-year agreement between Birkbeck and the trade unions.

As part of the agreement, Birkbeck and unionlearn – the learning and skills organisation of the TUC – are working together to champion higher education. This includes a 10% discount on tuition fees for trade unionists studying for new qualifications. Discounts worth nearly £400,000 have been claimed over the last three years.

Left: The Mayor of London (© City of London Corporation) Above, right: The Pop-Up University in Willesden Green (Xavier Inverarity)

# Awards & recognitions

The contribution and impact of Birkbeck academics have been recognised by major grants and by national and international academic institutions

## Awards

Birkbeck's pioneering and innovative approach to combining work and study has been recognised with a £1.47m award from the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Catalyst Fund. The award will enable the College to develop new, flexible undergraduate and postgraduate courses, which acknowledge the challenges of combining intensive evening study with daytime work, caring for a family or other commitments. Further College-wide strategic development will be enabled by a grant of up to £600,000 from the Wellcome Trust's Institutional Strategic Support Fund.

The Wellcome Trust has also awarded £900,000 to Daniel Pick, Professor of History, for a study into the role of the clinical professions in 'brainwashing'



during the Cold War. The project will explore the history of ideas about mind control, indoctrination and psychological warfare from the 1950s to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The social, political and cultural realities of the UK's major monotheistic faiths will be analysed in a research project funded by a £300,000 gift from The Exilarch's Foundation. Led by Stephen Frosh, Pro-Vice-Master Research and Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychosocial Studies, the three-year study will also explore how adolescents engage with Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Professor Ulrike Hahn, Department of Psychological Sciences, has won the €250,000 Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Anneliese Maier Research Award, in recognition of her research into the decision-making and language-learning aspects of human cognition.

Funded by the Wellcome Trust Investigator Award, Dr Jessica Reinisch, Department of History, Classics and Archaeology, will lead a four-year project, 'The Reluctant Internationalists', on the history of international collaborations driven by concerns about public health crises.

Left: The Wellcome Trust in central London (Wellcome Images)  
Below: Dr Angelica Ronald  
Right: The Houses of Parliament



As Britain heads towards its next general election, Dr Rosie Campbell, Department of Politics, will be conducting a comprehensive survey of the attitudes, backgrounds and experiences of the parliamentary candidates. Dr Campbell will be principal investigator, working with the British Election Study and researchers from six other UK universities, on the Representative Audit of Britain, a £500,000 project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

The Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions has been awarded to Dr Angelica Ronald (left), Department of Psychological Sciences, by the Association for Psychological Science for her research into the causes of autism and autistic traits.

A prestigious Distinguished Fellowship in Pharmaceutical Sciences has been awarded by Cipla, the global pharmaceutical company, to Dr Sanjib Bhakta (right), Reader in Molecular Microbiology, Department of Biological Sciences and Institute of Structural and Molecular Biology, for his research on tackling antibiotic resistance in tuberculosis.

## Recognitions

Birkbeck Fellow Michael Slater and College alumna Cleo Blackman were each awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. One of the world's most highly regarded Dickens scholars, Professor Slater, Emeritus Professor in the Department of English and Humanities, was recognised for his services to literary scholarship. Cleo Blackman, who graduated from Birkbeck's MSc Development Studies in 2011, received her award for services to development in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Joanna Bourke, Professor of History, and College Orator since 2012, has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy in recognition of her outstanding historical research.

The Sir Isaiah Berlin Prize for lifetime contribution to political studies has been awarded to Joni Lovenduski, Anniversary Professor in the Department of Politics, by the Political Studies Association. Also in the Department of Politics, Deborah Mabbett, Professor of Public Policy, has been appointed co-editor of *The Political Quarterly* magazine, the first woman to hold this position.

A lifetime's contribution to literary and cultural studies has been recognised by the election of Isobel Armstrong, Professor Emerita of English, to the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Professor Armstrong taught at Birkbeck from 1989 to 2002, publishing widely on nineteenth-century studies.

A National Teaching Fellowship has been awarded to Dr Matt Cook, Senior



Right: Private space shuttle (iStockphoto)  
Below: Dr Sanjib Bhakta  
Below, right: Tricia King



Lecturer in History and Gender Studies, by the Higher Education Academy in recognition of his championing of student-led learning.

The European Space Agency (ESA) has appointed Ian Crawford, Professor of Planetary Science and Astrobiology, to its Human Spaceflight and Exploration Science Advisory Committee, the senior ESA advisory body on the scientific exploitation of its spaceflight programmes.

Literary prizes won by academics in the Department of English and Humanities in 2014 include the Prix du Roman Fnac by Senior Lecturer Benjamin Wood for *Le Complexe d'Eden Bellwether*, the French translation of his novel *The Bellwether Revivals*. Dr Gillian Woods won the Shakespeare's Globe Book Award for her book *Shakespeare's Unreformed Fictions*, while Colin Teevan and Hannah Silva won the Tinniswood Radio Drama Award for Best Radio Drama Script, for their radio play *Marathon Tales*.

Professor Costas Douzinas, School

of Law, has been awarded the 2014 James Boyd White Award for lifelong contribution to scholarship by the Association for the Study of Law, Culture and the Humanities.

Tricia King (below), Pro-Vice-Master Strategic Engagement and Recruitment, has been awarded a Distinguished Service award by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.



# Booker Prize-winner Hilary Mantel discusses her art

Publishing sensation speaks about her award-winning fiction at the fourth Man Booker at Birkbeck event

Intrigue and politicking in the Tudor court were discussed during a lively and wide-ranging conversation between Birkbeck's Professor of Creative Writing Russell Celyn Jones and novelist Hilary Mantel. Mantel discussed her Booker Prize winning novel, *Bring up the Bodies* (2012), at the event organised by Birkbeck and the Booker Prize Foundation. This is the second book in an unfinished trilogy about the rise and fall of Henry VIII's shadowy chief minister Thomas Cromwell, who clambered from obscure origins to become one of the most powerful men in Tudor England.

*Wolf Hall* (2009), the first book and also the recipient of the Booker Prize, memorably opens with the young Cromwell reeling from an assault by his brutal father. From this startling opening onwards, the world of the Tudors is mediated through Cromwell's consciousness. Mantel discussed how the novels gestated for about thirty years, but it was during a visit to Putney,

Above, right: Hilary Mantel at the Man Booker at Birkbeck event in December 2014

Cromwell's place of birth, that she accessed his voice and interiority and composed the novel's opening line, "So now get up". Mantel delighted the audience by revealing that the eagerly awaited third novel, *The Mirror and the Light*, will close with Cromwell similarly felled, awaiting the executioner's axe.

*Wolf Hall* covers Cromwell's rise under Thomas Wolsey, his orchestration of Henry's divorce of Catherine of Aragon and subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn in 1533. *Bring up the Bodies* opens with Cromwell ascendant and charts the collapse of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, her usurpation by Jane Seymour, and Cromwell's coolly legalistic and ultimately brutal machinations to oust Boleyn at the king's behest, which culminated in her beheading in 1536. At the event at Friends' House in December 2014, Mantel discussed how Boleyn and Cromwell warily recognise their similarly precarious positions as social climbers in a world delineated by inherited wealth

and power, although Boleyn is hungry for status while Cromwell focuses on the acquisition of power. Ultimately, their entwined rise to prominence unravels and is replaced by a fierce, and ultimately bloody, enmity.

Mantel was unwilling to concede to the commonplace that the historical novel, long a critically disdained genre, reflects the present more than the past. Although accepting that 'every novel is written out of the sensibility of its time', she also keenly emphasised her efforts to enter and engage with the consciousness of people who lived 500 years ago, stressing that these historical figures were 'whole and entire' and not 'pallid rehearsals' of our modern selves.

The audience, which included students on Birkbeck's successful Creative Writing programmes, enjoyed Mantel's frankness about her working process, which involves the creation of 'scenes' built on meticulous research and a less mechanical process whereby the

voice, consciousness and worldview of a character is accessed, putting Mantel 'right there in the scene'. The novels have been duly praised for their vitality, suspense and the thrilling sense that history is still unfolding, demonstrating Mantel's extraordinary talent for historical ventriloquism.

This was the fourth Man Booker event at Birkbeck – previous speakers include Sarah Waters, Kazuo Ishiguro and Alan Hollinghurst – and follows Mantel's Orwell lecture at Birkbeck in 2009. Both the Booker Prize Foundation and Birkbeck share a commitment to bringing the highest intellectual and cultural achievements to the widest possible audience and this enlivening exchange further cemented this successful and rewarding partnership.

To watch a video of Hilary Mantel's appearance at December's Man Booker at Birkbeck event, visit [www.bbk.ac.uk/news/manbooker](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/news/manbooker)



# Talking sport at popular alumni reunions in Asia

Meeting alumni and tackling the subject of the English Premier League's business model were both on the agenda for Birkbeck staff during a 10-day visit

Birkbeck staff forged links and strengthened connections with universities, sporting organisations and alumni in South Korea and Japan during a busy tour in spring 2014. The series of events showcased Birkbeck's strengths in Sport Management and International Business, highlighted the skills and knowledge of alumni to employers, and also revealed the deep affection shown by alumni for their alma mater.

The plan for the activities emerged from Birkbeck's excellent reputation in South Korea and Japan. A total of 142 students from these countries have studied at Birkbeck in the last 18 years, and there is a particularly dedicated following for Sport Management programmes, with 23 students graduating since 2004. A sporting theme was selected for the sessions during the international trip.

Sean Hamil, Director of Birkbeck's Sport Business Centre, spoke about the economic, sporting and cultural phenomenon of the English Premier League at an event at the British Council's offices in Seoul. He showed how the K-League – the top football league in South Korea – can learn lessons from the successes of the business and broadcasting models developed by the English Premier League, which competes in South Korea for broadcasting slots with elite domestic sports.

At another event in Seoul, alumni spoke about building careers in sport. Alumni arranged the visits to the Korean

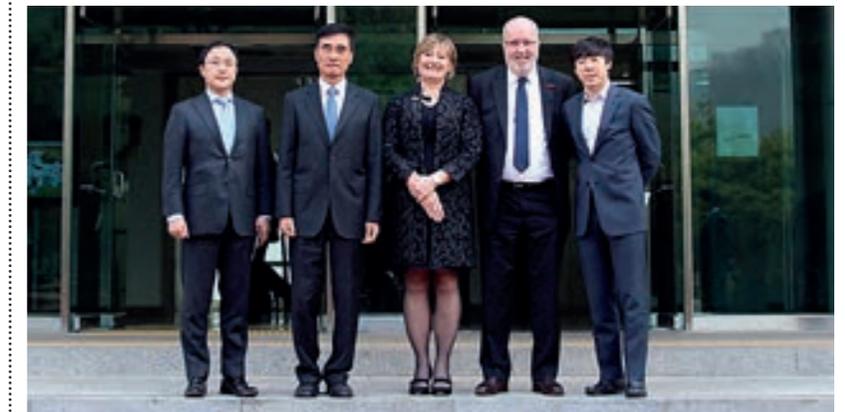
FA (based near the demilitarised zone separating North and South Korea) and the K-League, and Birkbeck staff also visited Seoul National University and Ewha Womans University – the world's largest women's university.

The next stop was Tokyo, where a reception was held for alumni, including married couple Shinsuke Itagaki and Yumi Itagaki, who first met when they were studying at Birkbeck in 2007. In Japan, Birkbeck staff also met prospective students and spoke to agents working to recruit students.

Mr Hamil said: "There is deep affection for Birkbeck among our alumni in South Korea and Japan. They really appreciate Birkbeck's heritage, the support shown by our staff, and the intellectual freedom and diversity associated with studying in London. It was a real pleasure to meet my former students again and I was overwhelmed by the hospitality we were shown during the trip."

The tour was organised by the Department of Management, the International Office, and the Development and Alumni Team. In addition to Mr Hamil, Birkbeck's Tricia King, Pro-Vice-Master Strategic Engagement and Recruitment, Matt Dean, Head of Marketing and Recruitment (International), and Luisa Barbaro, Alumni Engagement Manager, all took part.

Birkbeck would like to thank the alumni from South Korea and Japan for their help and wonderful support during the visits.



Right (from l-r): Jaehyun Kim, GSM Co Ltd; Gi Heon An, General Secretary, the Korean Football Association; Tricia King; Sean Hamil; Shin Tae-Yong, Promotion Ambassador of the K-League (Junekyu Choi)

# Events on campus

From an Olympian giving business advice to scientists marking the Year of Crystallography, fascinating events have attracted packed audiences throughout the year

## Arts Week

Arts Week 2014, which ran from 19-23 May, included nearly 40 performances, workshops, tours, readings, lectures and panel discussions and, as usual, was highly popular with alumni, current students and arts enthusiasts.

The week opened with a panel discussion on clouds as objects, metaphor and phenomena, considering these ephemeral bodies in contexts ranging from eighteenth-century meteorology and Romantic poetry to nuclear mushrooms and cloud computing.

A group of undergraduate students presented an installation version of their play *The Acts Between*, which explores the themes of mental health and the passing of time, responding to the spaces within Birkbeck's School of Arts and making links to the building's history and former inhabitants, including Virginia Woolf.



A panel discussion on writing new plays for the Shakespearean stage drew on the expertise of Birkbeck creative writing lecturer and playwright David Eldridge (below left) (whose latest play *Holy Warriors* was performed at the Globe last summer) and Shakespeare scholar Gillian Woods (whose book *Shakespeare's Unreformed Fictions* won the Shakespeare's Globe Book Award in August 2014).

Also drawing on the links between Birkbeck and London's cultural institutions, Dr Sarah Thomas gave a lecture on the role to be played by art in confronting Britain's troubling imperial past, based on her experience of working on a major Tate Britain exhibition - 'Art and Empire' - planned for 2015.

Events focusing on London past and present included a debate about whether London had its own Renaissance (see feature on pp 26-27).

A number of Arts Week events were captured on podcasts and blogs, which can be accessed at [www.bbk.ac.uk/artsweek2014](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/artsweek2014). Arts Week 2015 will run from 18-22 May. More information will be made available at: [www.bbk.ac.uk/artsweek](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/artsweek)

## Business Week

Business Week 2014, which ran from 23-26 June, coincided with the FIFA World Cup and drew inspiration from the world's greatest football tournament.

The theme for the series of public events was *From London to Rio: The business and politics of mega sport events*.

Leaders from the worlds of business and sport explored the legacy of London 2012 and the impact of the World Cup in Brazil. Keynote speakers included: Richard Ayers, founder and CEO of digital media firm Seven League, who discussed the impact of digital technology; Adrian Moorhouse MBE (above), swimmer and Olympic gold

medallist, who identified key factors in sport and their application to business; Neale Coleman CBE, deputy chair of the London Legacy Development Corporation, who reflected on the legacy of 2012; and David Bernstein CBE, former chairman of the Football Association, who highlighted challenges on governance-related issues in football.

Around 800 visitors attended the thought-provoking events, where they were also able to enjoy Brazilian music and Brazilian-themed hospitality arranged for Business Week.

## Law on Trial

Scientific evidence was the theme for Law on Trial 2014, which took place from 16-20 June. The School of Law's Professor Renata Salecl began the series of events with a lecture about the interplay between law, neuroscience and psychoanalysis.

Throughout the week, academics from Birkbeck and other universities joined legal practitioners to discuss the use of scientific evidence in legal scenarios. Subjects scrutinised included evidence in rape cases, the use of new technologies (such as satellite imaging and DNA analysis) to

uncover state crimes and mass violence, deaths in custody, and the role of experts.

The School's Annual Law Lecture in October 2013 was another highlight in the calendar. Angela Davis - the renowned American political activist and academic - spoke about the freedom struggle, including the emancipation proclamation, the civil rights movement, and the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Her lecture attracted 800 attendees. Birkbeck's Visiting Professor Michael Mansfield QC responded to her address and chaired the question and answer session.

## Science Week

Science Week 2014 was packed with innovative activities, including lab tours, a session about writing for a non-scientific audience, and one-to-one advice about careers in science.

There was a significant focus on crystallography (the study of atomic and molecular structures), as 2014 was the International Year of Crystallography. Emeritus Professors Paul Barnes and David Moss spoke about the past and future of the subject.

Other topics discussed by academics from Birkbeck's School of Science

included Dr Atsushi Senju speaking on the importance of face-to-face communication for babies, Dr Iroise Dumontheil on mindfulness meditation, Dr Martin Ingrouille on the evolutionary secrets of garden plants, Professor Hilary Downes on asteroids and the Earth, and Professor Rick Cooper on routine behaviour.

The week, which ran from 28 June to 4 July, began with SciScreen, organised in association with Science London, with three films looking at science from different perspectives, including the science behind special effects in film.

To watch events from Science Week 2014 visit: [www.bbk.ac.uk/science/about-us/events/science-week](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/science/about-us/events/science-week)

## Social Sciences Week

Politics, the environment and the concept of change were all under discussion from 16-19 June during Social Sciences Week 2014. The week provided an opportunity for members of the public to engage with diverse and thought-provoking topics.

The programme of events drew on the wide-ranging and exciting research being undertaken by scholars within Birkbeck's School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, and also featured high-profile external speakers. The week included: a talk on "Hobsbawm the Communist" with Professor Sir Richard Evans (University of Cambridge); a discussion of politics and photography with Martin Argles (former photographer for *The Guardian*) and Birkbeck's Department of Politics' first writer-in-residence, documentary photographer and poet Carlos Reyes Manzo; and a panel discussion on the concept of change in different disciplinary contexts.



Far left: Playwright David Eldridge  
Left: Adrian Moorhouse MBE at Business Week  
Above: Molecule image used to promote Science Week 2014  
Below: A portrait of Professor Eric Hobsbawm, painted in 1955 by Peter de Francia, was unveiled at Birkbeck in November 2014. The picture is on loan to the College from Hobsbawm's daughter, Julia Hobsbawm.





## Passing on the Birkbeck baton

Birkbeck alumni are sharing their knowledge and expertise in a range of innovative mentoring programmes

Birkbeck alumni understand just how challenging it can be to combine evening study with a demanding working day or busy family life. It's because of this that so many of them become involved in Birkbeck's innovative, and rapidly growing, mentoring programmes offered to applicants and current students at the College.

One such initiative, now in its third year, is the 'Get Talking' programme. Alumni are paired with prospective students – people who want to talk to others who have studied at Birkbeck, ideally on the same course or in the same academic department. The pairs meet for an informal coffee and chat over the summer months, before the applicant commits to enrolling on a course. The programme has had a success rate of 75% enrolments for the last two years. "Many universities focus their alumni

volunteering on working with current students, or they only interact with applicants at open days," said Luisa Barbaro, Birkbeck's Alumni Engagement Manager. "This one-to-one bespoke approach, particularly with prospective students, is incredibly popular."

Birkbeck alumni are also enthusiastic volunteers for the 'Business at Birkbeck' mentoring programme, a partnership between the College, the East London Business Alliance and a number of London companies. It pairs final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students in the School of Business, Economics and Informatics and the School of Law with alumni from those industries and with Birkbeck's corporate volunteers at Credit Suisse and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The programme recognises that Birkbeck students are typically older and many have aspirations to work in the corporate world. While some students simply want guidance about CVs and interview skills, others are keen to take advantage of the opportunity provided by Birkbeck to network and to learn from working professionals already employed in these environments in a capital city as vibrant and international as London.

Some 15% of the 50,000 alumni on Birkbeck's database have offered some sort of assistance to the College, a figure far higher than the average for the university sector. "This means we have a fantastic pool of graduates to call on. Birkbeck alumni are so passionate about their experience, they want to give something back," Luisa Barbaro added.

Both alumni mentors and mentees are given training before their sessions start, to help them make the most of the programme. Trainer Stephanie Peckham explained: "We encourage the mentees to

be really clear about what they want to get out of it, and explain that the mentor is not there to give the mentee a job.

"When training the mentors, we talk about the difference between mentoring and coaching, and we model conversations to help them deal with certain situations. We make the point that they are there to listen and ask questions – not just talk about how great their university experience was! Both sides find the training really useful – and we get great feedback at the end of the programmes as well."

Birkbeck alumnus Rick Payne is a first-time mentor with the Business at Birkbeck scheme. A qualified chartered accountant now working in management research at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, he completed an MSc in Organizational Behaviour at Birkbeck in 2008.

He said: "I'd been to a few alumni events, and when I heard about the mentoring schemes I thought this would be a good way to give something back. I believe lifelong learning is fundamentally important, and that Birkbeck is one of the few places, in my view, that really delivers on this.

"I am also a qualified coach, although I don't practise any more, so this is an ideal opportunity to keep those skills fresh. My mentee has already sent me her objectives, so I'm looking forward to getting started. She is also a coach, so our similar backgrounds may make for some interesting dynamics!

"Doing my MSc at Birkbeck gave me the research bug, and changed my career, so I really wanted to give back to the College in whatever ways I could."

Giles Forrest works for Credit Suisse and is now in his second year as a Business at Birkbeck mentor. He said: "I

Left: Trainer Stephanie Peckham  
Below: Mentors and mentees at the Business at Birkbeck reception in November 2014

work in change management and wanted to be a mentor because I like the idea of helping people recognise what they really want, challenging their mindsets and making the most of new opportunities."

His mentee this year is Joel Armando, who recently moved to London from her native Argentina and is studying for a Master's in Learning Technologies. Joel said: "I have worked in learning technologies in my university role in Argentina, but I am new to the industry here and looking to deepen my

knowledge and gain new skills. I hope the mentoring will clarify what I want and give me time to think about the way my career can develop in London. Talking to a person experienced in my field here in London will be a fantastic opportunity."

'Get Talking' and 'Business at Birkbeck' are two examples of how alumni can get involved and volunteer at Birkbeck. To find out more, or to offer your assistance, visit: [www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni/help](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni/help)



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This one-to-one bespoke approach, particularly with prospective students, is incredibly popular.



Above: Commuters at London's Kings Cross station (iStockphoto)

## From classroom to workplace

Our students thrive in the workplace and now new initiatives are underway to boost their employability even further

Birkbeck's students are made of sterner stuff than your average undergraduate or postgraduate. Their ability to combine evening study with work and/or family commitments is proof of their dedication, and employers value this perseverance.

So it is no surprise that after they finish studying, Birkbeck's students have the highest average graduate salary in the UK of £29,432 according to FindTheBest.co.uk, and that 88% of them are working or are engaged in further study according to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey.

Birkbeck's students are also often

driven by their desire to change career, and they appreciate advice geared towards helping them on their journey. These interests, of both students and employers, are being advanced thanks to a range of exciting new projects at Birkbeck.

Birkbeck has recently launched its own specialist recruitment consultancy, Birkbeck Talent. The service is designed to match students and graduates with leading employers, who are eager to tap into the university's pool of talented students.

Employers can register their full-time and part-time vacancies with Birkbeck

Talent, to receive a shortlist of candidates specifically selected for their role. Students register their CV, interests and employment preferences and then apply for roles via an online portal. If students are unsuccessful at application or interview, Birkbeck Talent will provide constructive feedback. The overall goal of the scheme is to help students to gain valuable employment experience, while also providing employers with an easy and effective way to source talented students and graduates.

Eleanor Martin is the Recruitment Manager at Birkbeck Talent. She said: "Students and employers are really enthusiastic about the scheme. Many students are keen to enhance their career by working full-time while they study. Employers are keen to recruit Birkbeck students, because they recognise the wealth of skills, motivation and talent within our student body."

The activities of Birkbeck Talent are also being complemented by various initiatives run by Birkbeck's Careers and Employability Service, which is open to both students and alumni. Free workshops at Birkbeck, one-to-one appointments, and online tools offering everything from CV advice to an interview simulator tool, as well as industry reports and resources, are available. A dedicated employability advisor is also based in the employability space within the Student Centre. A new service tailored to the needs of alumni, called GradCare, will be launched in 2015.

Mosh Aboobaker, Careers and Employability Manager at Birkbeck, said: "Whether it is online or face-to-face, we offer a range of resources to boost your career. We know building your career is a constant process, so we are very willing to work with alumni as well as current students."

For more information about Birkbeck's Careers and Employability Service, visit: [www.bbk.ac.uk/careers](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/careers)

For more information about Birkbeck Talent, visit: [www.bbk.ac.uk/careers/birkbeck-talent](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/careers/birkbeck-talent)

# Chair of Governors



Harvey McGrath

Changing policies and pressures within the higher education sector have led Birkbeck to refocus some activities and to embark on new areas over recent years.

For the first time in 2014 our new three-year undergraduate programmes recruited more students than our traditional four-year degrees. We have also intensified our work with corporate partners to finance scholarships and capital projects, and develop mentoring programmes. As the first wave of undergraduates to have studied under the post-2012 funding regime graduate in 2015 with significant tuition fee debt, Birkbeck is paying particular attention to ensuring that our postgraduate offering is made as accessible and as appealing as possible to this cohort.

### Development and alumni relations

Our fundraising team continues to generate support to assist students in financial need and to facilitate cross-College projects. £1.1m was raised in 2013-2014 from over 1,800 donors, with gifts ranging from £5 to £148,000. The 1823 Circle, which was established in 2012, now has 23 donors each making annual gifts of between £5,000 and £25,000.

The College has developed new corporate partnerships with Santander, ArcelorMittal and PricewaterhouseCoopers (see also pp8-9). Their involvement brings rewards that go beyond the financial, and we anticipate this area continuing to grow as companies become increasingly

interested in working with the College and our student body to further Birkbeck's unique mission.

As ever, student support is the focus of many donors' generosity, with a noticeable emphasis on postgraduate study, where there is very limited external funding available. The majority of donations come from alumni, who also contribute their time, knowledge and expertise.

The number of alumni involved in mentoring and volunteering programmes has nearly doubled in the last year. Over 300 prospective, current and international students have benefited from these initiatives with a tangible impact on student retention and recruitment (as seen on pp18-19).

### College finances

The College's total income was £101,463,000, an increase of 5.4% on the previous year, thanks to continuing strong growth of student numbers at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. A focus on strong financial management has resulted in a surplus of over 6.5%, which combined with the surplus from the previous three years leaves the College with an increase in cash and current investments of over £22.2m over the same period. The College now has a sound financial basis on which it can plan and build for the future.

### Green agenda

We continue our partnership with other Bloomsbury colleges to improve environmental performance. A new

Carbon Management Plan is now in place to help guide our carbon reduction efforts. The plan sets out initiatives that will reduce the environmental impact of our operations and planned growth, and will help deliver a 10% reduction in carbon emissions from the current levels by 2020-2021.

Via our environmental programme 'the Green thing', we are mobilising the Birkbeck community to make small changes that together will make a big difference to reducing our carbon footprint.

In September 2014 we renewed our Fairtrade Accreditation for another two years.

### Outlook

During the coming year we will continue to focus our attention on working with partners and donors, to ensure that we are able to offer our students the support they need to succeed in their education and to develop the skills that employers require, through our undergraduate and growing postgraduate scholarship provision, as well as opportunities to network with professionals and employers through networking and other programmes.

The College's strong financial position, successful student recruitment strategies and forward-thinking leadership mean I am confident that we will be able to make the most of the opportunities that present themselves in this continuously changing environment.

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**The number of alumni involved in mentoring and volunteering programmes has nearly doubled in the last year.**

# Birkbeck celebrates research success



A major audit of the UK's research confirms Birkbeck as a leading research-intensive university

Birkbeck has been ranked 30th in the UK for its research by the *Times Higher Education* following the publication of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) results in December 2014. This places the College above Russell Group institutions such as Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool, Queen Mary, Sheffield and York.

The results of the REF – an audit of

the quality of research across the UK's universities – show that 73% of Birkbeck's research is rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' – the top two categories. Of the 14 subject areas that Birkbeck submitted to the REF, half were rated in the top 20 nationally.

Birkbeck's science submissions performed exceptionally well, with Psychological Sciences rated 5th in the UK and the College's two joint submissions with UCL – Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences, and Biological Sciences – rated 6th and 11th respectively.

In keeping with the rest of the sector, our research was found to have improved significantly since the last such research assessment in 2008, when 56% of our research was rated in the top two categories.

This sector-wide improvement partly reflects the strategic decision by many universities to submit only their most research-active academics for assessment. Birkbeck submitted 83% of eligible staff to the 2014 REF, well above the national average. This led to the College's strong performance in league tables which take into account the percentage of staff, rather than just the overall grade point average of research, submitted. Our outstanding subjects in the *Times Higher Education's* 'research-intensity' league tables (published 1 January 2015) include Law, ranked 6th overall (putting it among the top 10 law schools alongside the LSE, UCL, Oxford and Cambridge) and History, ranked 7th.

Similarly, the College performed strongly in league tables based simply on the percentage of research judged to be 'world-leading', indicating the very high quality of much of our research.

The 2014 REF put a new emphasis on universities demonstrating the impact of their research beyond academia. Birkbeck's strong



Art, history and culture



Learning, education and development



Conservation and heritage



Science and biomedicine



Politics, society and the law



Work and the economy

results showed the relevance of the College's research to many aspects of our everyday lives, whether influencing policy-makers in their thinking about early years education; working with major companies such as Proctor & Gamble to educate parents about their child's development; or trialling new drugs for the treatment of cancer. In three subject areas – History; Art and Design; and Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience – 100% of Birkbeck's submissions received the highest ratings for impact.

Professor Stephen Frosh, Pro-Vice-Master Research, said: "Birkbeck's results show the enormous amount of hard work that has gone on in recent years by our academics. At a time of turmoil in the higher education system, they have continued to produce top-quality research. This also reflects the College's research strategy, which is deeply committed to creating the best possible conditions for academics to be active in research and to pursue their own intellectual interests."

"As well as celebrating the outstanding performance of some of our top disciplines, it is pleasing that new areas such as Sociology and our reconfigured Modern Languages group did well, reflecting the College's ability to build new research areas over time."

During 2014 the College redeveloped its website research pages to showcase the broad scope of our research and its impact under six themes (shown left): arts, history and culture; conservation and heritage; learning, education and development; politics, society and the law; science and biomedicine; and work and the economy.

Nationally, the main purpose of the REF is to determine the bulk of research funding which each UK university will receive between 2015 and 2021. Funding decisions based on the REF results will be announced in spring 2015.

Read more about research at Birkbeck at [www.bbk.ac.uk/research](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/research) and listen to a podcast with Professor Frosh at [bbk.ac.uk/birkbeckvoices/episode28](http://bbk.ac.uk/birkbeckvoices/episode28)



## Flying fish fertilise forest

Windblown from Africa to the Amazon, dust from ancient fish skeletons is key to rainforest growth

Above: Sub-fossil skeleton of a 1.15m long Nile Perch preserved within diatomite on the floor of palaeolake Mega Chad (Charlie Bristow)

Scientists have known for some time that dust created in the Bodélé Depression in the Sahara is picked up by winds, carried across the Atlantic and deposited on the Amazon rainforest, where it plays an important role in fertilising the plants and trees. In 2014, new research led by Birkbeck and involving colleagues from the University of Leeds and Diamond Light Source showed that the reason the dust is so effective at fertilising the Amazon is that it contains fish bone – a rich source of phosphorous, which is an essential nutrient for photosynthesis. However, this phosphorous-rich dust is a finite resource, which will not be available to the rainforest indefinitely.

The researchers analysed dust samples taken from the Bodélé Depression in Chad, in north-central Africa, which is the world's largest single source of dust. Thousands of years ago the area was what is known as a mega-lake – covering an estimated 1,000,000km<sup>2</sup> – but over the last 10,000 years the lake has dried up. The skeletons of the fish and other organisms that lived in the lake still remain in the top level of dust in the lake bed.

Professor Karen Hudson-Edwards (see p24), from Birkbeck's Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, who led the study, has explained why the source of the phosphorous is so significant. She

said: "Phosphorous occurs in dust in many different forms, some of which are more soluble than others, and therefore are more readily available to plants. Previously we didn't know whether the phosphorous in the Bodélé dust was from inorganic and less soluble sources, or from organic sources. This study helps explain why the Bodélé dust is so important to rainforest growth."

Phosphorous from biogenic sources (such as fish bone) is more soluble than inorganic sources (such as in rock). This means that the biogenic sources are readily available to plants, whereas inorganic sources will take longer to be dissolved and utilised.

A paper based on this research, published in September 2014 in the journal *Chemical Geology*, also highlighted the fact that the top layers of the Bodélé Depression, which contain the biogenic phosphorous and are the source of the dust, will eventually be fully eroded.

Professor Hudson-Edwards said: "At the moment we don't know how long the Bodélé Depression will continue to provide phosphorous to the Amazon. With the rainforest already under threat from human activity, we now hope to conduct further research to ascertain when this important source of fertiliser will run out."

# New professors

Five members of Birkbeck staff were promoted to the post of Professor in 2013–2014



**Richard Cooper**  
Professor of Cognitive Science  
Professor Cooper's research is concerned with the cognitive processes underlying the control of thought and action. He combines computational and empirical methods to address questions such as how we are able to do multiple tasks concurrently, what constraints there may be on these due to cognitive limitations, and how these processes may break down following brain injury.

In 2011, he co-authored a major monograph, *The Organisation of Mind*, which was awarded a British Academy Medal in 2013. In 2015, he will take up the role of Executive Editor of the international journal *Cognitive Science*, having previously been associate editor on three cognitive science journals. He serves on the programme committee for the annual conference of the Cognitive Science Society, having been co-chair in 2012.

**Karen Hudson-Edwards**  
Professor of Environmental Geochemistry and Mineralogy  
Professor Hudson-Edwards studies the processes and products of the biogeochemical cycling of contaminants and nutrients in mine wastes, waters, dusts and contaminated land (see also p23). She is particularly interested in how minerals dissolve in the presence and absence of bacteria and organic materials, and how toxic elements are released during this process. Her team is using this knowledge to inform remediation schemes and to protect humans and ecosystems. Professor Hudson-Edwards has recently conducted work in Australia, Bolivia, Cyprus, Spain and Pakistan.

**Carolyn Moores**  
Professor of Structural Biology  
Professor Moores' research focuses on the cytoskeleton – the skeleton-like structures found inside all cells. The cytoskeleton is essential in providing shape and organisation to cells and acting as a track for molecular motors transporting cargo within cells. The Moores Group takes pictures of individual cytoskeleton filaments using an electron microscope, then analyses these pictures computationally to calculate the three-dimensional shape of cytoskeleton filaments. Studying the cytoskeleton helps us to understand both how healthy cells work and how malfunctions of the cytoskeleton cause disease. Accordingly, the Group's research involves aspects of brain development, cancer and malaria.

Professor Moores also acts as Academic Co-ordinator for doctoral programmes in the Institute of Structural Molecular Biology and is involved in the Athena Scientific Women's Academic Network project.

**Caroline Humfress**  
Professor of History  
Before moving to Birkbeck in 2004, Caroline Humfress was Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Law at the University of California, Berkeley and prior to that a research fellow at the University of Oxford. Since October 2012 she has been Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Research Students in the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy at Birkbeck. Her research explores the fundamental question 'What is the "state" and how might it – or how should it – relate to law and religion?', with particular reference to the Roman Empire.

**Nikolaus Wachsmann**  
Professor of Modern European History  
Professor Wachsmann specialises in the history of discipline and punishment in modern Germany, with a focus on policing, law, terror and resistance in the Third Reich. Before joining Birkbeck in 2005, he was a research fellow at Downing College, University of Cambridge, and a lecturer at the University of Sheffield. He is director of doctoral students in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology and teaches BA and MA modules. His first book, *Hitler's Prisons: Legal Terror in Nazi Germany* (Yale), was widely translated and was joint winner of the 2005 Longman-History Today Book of the Year award. He has since published extensively on modern German history and has directed a major Arts and Humanities Research Council research project at Birkbeck on the early Nazi camp system. Professor Wachsmann's general history of the concentration camps will be published in spring 2015.

In the current academic year, Marina Warner, Professor of English and Creative Writing, has joined the Department of English and Humanities in the School of Arts, and Jacqueline Rose has joined the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities as Professor of Humanities.

## Teaching excellence



Inspiring and innovative teaching are the hallmarks of the winners of the 2014 Birkbeck Excellence in Teaching Awards

Dr Frederic Dick (above), Reader in Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Psychological Sciences, and Dr Amber Jacobs, Lecturer in the Department of Psychosocial Studies, have both been recognised this year for their contributions to teaching at Birkbeck.

**Very interactive classes**  
Dr Dick teaches the Plasticity, Constraint, Expertise and Talent module of the Psychology BSc or MSc. He was nominated for a Birkbeck Excellence in Teaching Award (BETA) for his innovative work and his commitment to making this challenging subject matter accessible to a diverse group of learners.

He said: "The module looks at how the brain adapts to optimise learning and skill acquisition. The aim is for students to understand the science of how and why it is that some people become experts in different fields, such as music, sport or chess. They also get to understand how this can be directly applied to their own studies."

"The class is very interactive: the students learn about each other's skills as well as learning new methods in areas such as functional magnetic resonance imaging."

"The BETA is a nice affirmation of my teaching. I particularly enjoy the diverse nature of the teaching group; as mature students, they are frequently experts in their own fields. A student's past

experience is really important to this course."

**Video essays**  
Dr Jacobs said: "My research and teaching focus on the feminist analysis of cultural production, ranging from literary and philosophical texts to visual cultures."

"In my recent Master's course in Visual Culture, I introduced the 'audiovisual essay' as a process of getting inside the visual object and experimenting with the specific visual medium, using simple software such as iMovie or the Windows equivalent."

"Students were asked to make video essays as a practice-based response to the films, photographs and theoretical texts that were set. After one practical workshop, almost all students produced ambitious video essays."

"Many students expressed how the process gave them deeper insight into the 'constructed-ness' of the film image, as well as achieving new digital skills and confidence as image makers. Feedback consistently referred to the 'inspiring experience' of making the video essay and watching other people's, and how this process of getting inside the visual medium transformed their approach to visual culture, making them more politically and critically aware about the ways in which images are constructed and manipulated."

# Commuting through the Renaissance

## Professor Sue Wiseman points out the everyday clues to our city's Renaissance history

Below: *The North Prospect of London taken from the Bowling Green at Islington, by Thomas Bowles, c. 1740. New River Head, centre-left, Upper Pond in foreground (London Metropolitan Archives, City of London (COLLAGE 27623))*

Did London have a Renaissance, and how can we tell? Surprisingly, some of the evidence for answering this question is available to Londoners even on our way to work. There is quite a lot of seventeenth-century London around us.

Those who travel from the west up Whitehall pass through the palace of Henry VIII, inhabited after him by Elizabeth I, James VI and I, Charles I and the later Stuarts. It is possible to roughly map the area covered by that palace using a map from the period known as the Agas map in combination with physical markers. The Banqueting House on Whitehall was built to house the celebrations, receptions of ambassadors and plays that were an important part of the Renaissance monarch's magnificence. The first banqueting house was built by Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I followed up with a series of temporary structures including one 'made of great masts', with painted canvas walls – cheap

and cheerful but also chilly. When James VI and I arrived from Edinburgh, he restarted the building project in the present location and, after a fire in 1619, the structure we have today was erected on the south-west of the palace area. The building was conceived by Inigo Jones, bringing his interests in current Italian architecture, and completed in 1633, well over budget at £14,940. Once Charles I had commissioned, shipped and installed a huge ceiling painting by Rubens' masques were again banished to a wooden structure lest the torches damage or even ignite Rubens' rich vision of the union of the Scottish and English crowns. However, another kind of conflagration consumed Charles' government. Indeed, Rubens' ceiling must have been among his last sights on earth, for on 30 January 1649 he was led out of a window in his beloved banqueting house to be beheaded on a wooden scaffold. It is said that the window through which he went is blocked up.

Anyone who travels by bus down Upper Street will pass a statue of Hugh Myddleton – the architect of the New River. London's massive expansion in the later sixteenth century had left the water supply in a parlous and unhealthy condition. Throughout the 1590s the City explored the possibility of digging a canal to the springs of Hertfordshire and work was started in 1604 by Edward Colthurst. When Colthurst ran into financial trouble, Hugh Myddleton used his position as a goldsmith, merchant and powerbroker in the City to finish the job – and take the credit. The wood-lined New River is a delicate feat of engineering, which still brings water from Hertfordshire to London. It is, indeed, a river not a canal, using a gradient to bring water into London. The New River was declared open by the Lord Mayor with a pageant written by Thomas Middleton (no relation) celebrating the arrival of London's newly clean water. The river ended at the top of Rosebery

Avenue, where street names, waterworks and a late seventeenth-century room still mark its terminus. The best way to see the New River today is to take the train to Broxbourne and walk its banks and those of the River Lea.

Cheam, in south London, is also worth a trip to look at the Lumley tombs and explore the site of Henry VIII's magnificent palace of Nonsuch. On certain days you can visit the Lumley tombs in a chapel in the churchyard of St Dunstan's. In the 1590s Lord John Lumley, a Roman Catholic peer who had also held Nonsuch Palace, set aside the chapel for himself and his wife. The three tombs contain Lord John himself, his first wife, the renownedly learned writer and translator, Jane, and his second wife, Elizabeth, who outlived him.

Finally, the traveller from the east moves along the path of Roman routes to and through London. The Apothecaries' Hall is just south of St Paul's, in the middle of the Blackfriars

“Rubens' ceiling must have been among Charles I's last sights on earth as he was led out of a window in his beloved banqueting house to be beheaded on a wooden scaffold.”

complex where they located in 1617 when James VI and I finally granted them guild status. Although the original hall was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, these premises are perhaps the closest thing London has to an original guildhall, described by London's chronicler John Strype as having “a fair pair of Gates” and a courtyard “handsomely paved with broad Stones”. As you stand in the courtyard of the apothecaries, somewhere close by was the hall in which plays were staged in two different theatres. Once we realise how close together the stage and the potions were, Blackfriars plays like *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, with its many jokes about grocers and apothecaries (just think about the title), seem to have newly concrete implications. Together, text and buildings allow us to think again about the spaces of the past.

Sue Wiseman is Professor of Seventeenth-Century Literature at Birkbeck.



# Innovative technologies for learning and teaching

Pupils are improving their maths, and teachers are enhancing their lessons, thanks to computer systems developed by researchers at Birkbeck



There are many pedagogical benefits to using technology in the right way in the classroom and these are being demonstrated by a range of exciting projects. New tools produced by academics at the London Knowledge Lab in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems have been piloted in schools across the world, including in London, and the feedback has been positive.

The researchers follow an interdisciplinary methodology in which pedagogical theory informs the initial design of algorithms and tools. These are then iteratively evolved and enhanced through successive cycles of user-centred evaluation. Concurrently, pedagogical theory and practice are transformed through the provision of tools to education experts and practitioners.

## iTalk2Learn

One of the major projects is called iTalk2Learn, which aims to develop an open-source intelligent tutoring platform that supports maths learning for pupils aged five to 11. Funded by the European Commission, this three-year, €3m project recognises that young children are much more likely to respond to spoken, rather than written, instructions and suggestions.

As part of the research, a speaking computer program has been designed to teach fractions to children aged seven to nine. Birkbeck is one of four universities involved in the research, and it is receiving approximately €500,000 for its part in the study involving schools in the UK and Germany.

Dr Sergio Gutiérrez Santos, Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, is leading Birkbeck's participation in iTalk2Learn, which ends in October 2015. He said: "The computer program speaks to the children, and we know this is a very effective way of teaching. The children are encouraged to talk through their answers, and voice recognition software enables the program to interact with them, and assess their performance. Children learn more from their mistakes than from their successes, and the iTalk2Learn system is designed to support their learning in an exploratory way."

## MiGen

Pupils have also benefited from computer-based tools when learning algebra, which is notoriously difficult for children to learn. In collaboration with the Institute of Education, researchers at Birkbeck have developed the MiGen system, which transforms the learning of algebraic concepts. Instead of working with symbols and equations, pupils use this software to construct 2-D tiling patterns and, simultaneously, develop algebraic rules about the properties of their patterns. The system was tested at schools in London, as well as at schools in Mexico, Singapore and Brazil.

MiGen's main intelligent component, called the eGeneraliser, gathers information about pupils' construction activities and uses this to make inferences about pupils' progress in knowledge assimilation. The provision of real-time feedback to pupils without destroying the exploratory and creative potential of their interaction with the system is a major contribution of this research to the field of intelligent constructionist tools for learning and teaching. Teachers are also able to monitor the progress of their pupils thanks to a suite of Teacher Assistance tools, which can additionally suggest pedagogically informed pairings for group work, based on a detailed analysis of all the pupils and their work.

Alex Poulouvassilis, Professor of Computer Science in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems and Co-Director of the London Knowledge Lab, was one of the principal investigators of the MiGen project. She said: "This work was pioneering as it provides intelligent support to both students and teachers during constructionist learning activities. The feedback we received was very positive."

## The Learning Designer

The third major project in this area was the Learning Design Support Environment (LDSE), which was motivated by the need to support lecturers and teachers in capturing their pedagogic ideas, testing them out, reworking them, allowing them to build on what others have learnt, and to share their results with their community.

The Learning Designer promotes the concept of lecturers or teachers as designers, in that they use what is already known in order to keep improving their practice, to innovate, and

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**This work was pioneering as it provides intelligent support to both students and teachers during constructionist learning activities.**

to articulate and share that practice with others. The software allows users to upload existing lesson plans or to create new ones. It then analyses them and helps tutors to recognise how much of their learning designs are dedicated to various pedagogic practices (namely acquisition, reflection and production), and makes suggestions.

The Learning Designer was adopted for training computer science graduates studying for the MSc in Educational Technology at the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE) in Greece and at the University of Macerata's Faculty of Education in Italy in a module for trainee teachers.

George Magoulas, Professor of Computer Science in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at Birkbeck, was one of the principal investigators on the LDSE project. He said: "The tool is designed to encourage teachers to think about how they can improve the way they teach. It promotes novel approaches to teaching, encouraging tutors to break away from the traditional one-way instruction and move towards personalised learning experiences enhanced by modern technology."

Both the £1.5m LDSE project and the £1.3m MiGen project were funded as part of the Technology Enhanced Learning Programme managed by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. They were both undertaken in collaboration with staff from the Institute of Education and other education specialists and practitioners. Birkbeck received £300,000 and £600,000 for the LDSE and MiGen projects respectively.

The MiGen and LDSE projects were mentioned in Birkbeck's submission for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) – an audit of the quality of all the research carried out in the UK higher education sector (p22).

The projects were both included in an impact case study, entitled *Intelligent constructionist tools for learning and teaching*, which was part of the submission for Computer Science and Informatics – one of the Units of Assessment.

The results of the REF were announced in December 2014.

For more information on research at Birkbeck, visit [www.bbk.ac.uk/research](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/research)

# Digital Dickens

## Dr Ben Winyard explains the online project to recreate the original Dickensian reading experience

Over his career, Charles Dickens (1812–70) wrote fifteen novels, five Christmas novellas and hundreds of short stories and articles, while also composing thousands of letters, giving almost weekly speeches and readings, and editing two periodicals (*Household Words* and *All the Year Round*). The field of Dickens studies, then, is vast and critical work has expanded exponentially over the past fifty years, particularly as previous critical sniffiness about ‘Mr Popular Sentiment’ – as Trollope derisively termed Dickens – has been replaced by a much richer and deeper literary-critical appreciation of Dickens.

Birkbeck has been a world-leading centre for Dickensian studies since the 1960s: many famous Dickens scholars have taught and researched, or been trained and nurtured, here. Emeritus Professor Michael Slater, the world’s foremost Dickens scholar and a recent recipient of the MBE, taught in Birkbeck’s Department of English and Humanities for many years, while other notable Birkbeck academics who have expanded our understanding of Dickens include Isobel Armstrong, Steven Connor, John Drew, Holly Furneaux, Barbara Hardy and Sally Ledger, among others. An annual Dickens Day conference was established by Professor Slater and other Birkbeck lecturers in 1986 and the event, which is now jointly run by Birkbeck, the University of Leicester and the Dickens Fellowship, has just celebrated its twenty-eighth year.



Main image:  
Charles Dickens  
(iStockphoto)

“ ”  
**Our aim is recapture the materialities and rhythms of nineteenth-century serial reading through digital media, while our blog promises to become a fascinating repository of critical thinking and discussion about the novel and a vital future resource for students, scholars and Dickens fans alike.**

Birkbeck has also been a notable contributor to the field of digital humanities and is at the forefront of utilising computing technologies to help us experience and think about Dickens in new and exciting ways. Birkbeck’s Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies is currently orchestrating an online reading project, focused on *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65), which builds on the successes of other recent digital Dickens projects. *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens’s last completed novel, is encountered by most readers today as a rather hefty paperback, usually replete with an introduction, footnotes and appendices, or electronically on a tablet or e-book reader. Although the medium may change, the format – a single volume novel – remains the same. Victorian readers, however, first encountered *Our Mutual Friend* in 20 separate monthly parts, published between May 1864 and November 1865. Each instalment cost one shilling and was 32 pages long with two illustrations and over 70 pages of advertisements.

Running between May 2014 and November 2015, the online reading project marks the novel’s 150th anniversary and will finish just in time for the tenth anniversary of Birkbeck’s free online journal, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*. In its first decade, *19* has featured contributions from many notable scholars and remains true to its founding mission to provide original, intellectually rigorous scholarship for free. Many Birkbeck students have interned on the journal, acquiring online publishing skills, before moving on to successful careers in academia, publishing and various digital enterprises.

Queen’s University Belfast has scanned the novel’s original monthly parts, giving us a great sense of the reading experience of Dickens’s contemporaries. We read each instalment on the first of the month and then a post on our blog, which might cover any aspect of the instalment, gets the conversation started. We welcome any and all comments, from academics, specialists, enthusiasts or anybody who wants to share their thoughts. Our aim is recapture the materialities and rhythms of nineteenth-century serial reading through digital media, while our blog promises to become a fascinating repository of critical thinking and discussion about the novel and a vital future

resource for students, scholars and Dickens fans alike.

Alongside this, we are retelling the novel on Twitter: dozens of people are composing tweets, which can be no more than 140 characters long, in the guise of the novel’s panoply of characters. One of the most famous lines in *Our Mutual Friend* comes in part five (September 1864), when Betty Higden delightedly exclaims, as the founding Sloppy reads the newspaper aloud, “‘He do the Police in different voices.’” Similarly, our anonymous tweeters are taking on the voices of Dickens’s characters. They follow the trajectory of the monthly parts, but often take their own Dickensian flights of fancy, composing new dialogue, interacting with different characters and even developing online lives beyond the novel’s confines. In a development that would have surely delighted Dickens, some of the novel’s inanimate objects, including the stuffed crocodile in Mr Venus’s taxidermy shop and Silas Wegg’s wooden leg, are also tweeting. At the end of every month, the tweets are collated on Storify, thus providing an alternative retelling.

With readers in over 80 countries and contributions from scholars, students and staff at Birkbeck and other universities worldwide, these digital projects are forging new reading communities, bringing Dickens to new audiences, and challenging and expanding how we read, understand and enjoy Dickens. These Dickensian projects are also part of a wider digital strategy within the School of Arts, with some exciting new initiatives in the pipeline.

- *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*  
[www.19.bbk.ac.uk](http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk)
- Birkbeck’s Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies  
[www.bbk.ac.uk/english/our-research/research\\_cncs](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/our-research/research_cncs)
- *Our Mutual Friend* project  
[dickensourmutualfriend.wordpress.com](http://dickensourmutualfriend.wordpress.com)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/DickensOMF](https://www.facebook.com/DickensOMF)  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DickensOMF>

Dr Ben Winyard is the co-organiser of the annual Dickens Day conference. He completed his PhD in English at Birkbeck, and is also the Digital Publications Officer at the College.

# THE HISTORY OF ENERGY

**Professor Frank Trentmann shares research about managing energy shortages in Britain, Japan and Germany**

**E**nergy scarcity has profound implications for economies and societies, but also for the day-to-day routines of individuals and families. In the twentieth century, the realities of energy shortages extended beyond blackouts to changing work patterns and debates about the energy usage of industry versus household consumers.

Shortages were a feature of life in socialist East Germany (German Democratic Republic, GDR), from its creation in 1949. Peak-time restrictions led to factories operating late into the night from East Berlin to Karl-Marx Stadt. In Japan, following World War Two, wood charcoal and firewood were rationed and electricity and gas supplies were controlled both by official regulations and planning. Britain also faced ongoing difficulties, with frequent load shedding in the 1940s, regular power cuts into the early 1950s, and three years of unstable power supply after the big freeze of 1963.

Understanding the history of such disruptions is one of the four aims of the new 'Material Cultures of Energy' research project based at Birkbeck. The four-year, £766,568 initiative is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project focuses on the lived, material and imagined world of energy, drawing on film, objects, fiction, time-use, consumer manuals and oral history, as well as official and industrial archives. The research examines how culture and energy shaped each other and seeks to advance the debate about the role of

consumers in energy transitions, past, present and future.

The focus on energy shortages is partly to overcome amnesia and to suggest that shortages were an integral feature of affluence and growth – not only of recession. The interest in shortages is also motivated by what they can reveal about the coping mechanisms of advanced modern societies.

In November 2014, I presented some early findings about energy shortages with my co-presenter Dr Hiroki Shin, then Research Associate at the Sustainable Consumption Institute at the University of Manchester at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena, California. At this *Coping with Scarcity* conference, historians, social scientists, engineers and scientists examined various types of scarcity, including water, food and energy, and the interplay of natural, economic and political forces. The two-day event uncovered the complexity of scarcity, past and present, as well as the myriad proposals for its solution.

We showed how energy disruption did not affect all energy users equally. For example, in Japan in the late 1940s, families would have seen from their dark homes brightly lit factories, as the country was frantically trying to recover from the destruction of war. In the same period, British factory managers were blaming shortages on 'excessive' household consumers.

Past disruptions tell us how unevenly burdens were distributed between different groups of consumers. In a very real sense, the course of disruption was often determined by society, based on ideas about who should have more energy and who less, and who should have it at what time of day or night. Culture and society shaped where and when the lights went out – not just nature or technology. It is therefore no surprise that tensions emerged not only between suppliers and consumers but also among consumers themselves. In historical sources, we can see how different consumers were weighed against each other. After the Second World War, British homes, for example, were far more favourably treated than Japanese households, which until the 1950s were placed at the bottom of the supply list. Yet, people did not always accept their fate. In Japan, dissatisfied consumers organised protest movements. Some just 'cheated' suppliers.

Such distributional conflicts also affected the rhythm of day and night, as governments tried

to shift electricity use out of peak hours. The lack of energy triggered a reconfiguration of work and everyday life. During the 1946–1947 fuel crisis in Britain, waking up late would have meant missing out on hot water and hot breakfast. Household chores needed to be done within specified hours when electricity was permitted, or they had to be done without electrical appliances at all. In East Germany, industrial workers were told to work into the night – in order to shift the peak hours. Such shift work had knock-on effects on eating rhythms, sleeping, shopping and child care that were particularly hard on mothers.

Today, there is once again talk among politicians and energy providers in Britain and Europe about future blackouts and a more precarious allocation of energy. Developing

nations cannot expect smooth growth and energy security either. If there is one lesson from the past, it is that it is too simple to trust that technology will fix the problem. Abundance and scarcity go hand in hand. Shortages involve politics and culture, as do societies' strategies to deal with them. What people did when the lights went out in the past could tell us something about our flexibility and resilience in the future.

In addition to the research on the disruption of energy, the 'Material Cultures of Energy' research project includes three other themes: energy futures; how rural spaces were transformed by grids; and how people managed and experienced the transition from one fuel to another. We investigate these themes by comparing Britain, Germany, Japan, North America and India, with their different energy

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**During the 1946–1947 fuel crisis in Britain, waking up late would have meant missing out on hot water and hot breakfast.**

systems, cultures and everyday practices. The research will lead to a better understanding of the past, which will then inform how we think about, and approach, the future of energy – a subject set to grow in importance in the decades ahead.

Frank Trentmann is Professor of History at Birkbeck, and the Principal Investigator for the Material Cultures of Energy research project. Dr Shin, the Co-Investigator, began working at Birkbeck in January 2015. The project team also includes Dr Heather Chappells, of Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada; Dr Vanessa Taylor, a former Birkbeck PhD student who now works at the University of Greenwich; and Rebecca Wright, who is currently completing her PhD at Birkbeck. The project will run until December 2017.



Left: 'More electricity for building socialism', East Germany 1952. Image: Landesarchiv Berlin  
Far left: Electrical Development Association, 'No Electric Fires' campaign, c.1950. Image reproduced by permission of the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester

# Law enforcement and the global HIV epidemic

Professor Matthew Weait explains how the School of Law at Birkbeck has contributed to an international policing consultation on public health and human rights

When we think of police work, we typically think of it as being concerned with law enforcement and public order: the purpose of policing is the detection of criminals and keeping the peace. Even if the truth is somewhat more complex, the professional orientation of police officers towards these functions can result in unintended and negative side effects – especially in the policing of particularly vulnerable communities. Indeed, there is robust empirical evidence indicating that traditional approaches to policing can result in adverse health outcomes for those who are at increased risk of harm. In particular, a focus on their law and order function, a narrow view of what constitutes public safety, and a conservative occupational culture has meant that in many parts of the world the police have contributed to an enhanced risk of HIV infection among so called ‘key populations’, including sex workers and injecting drug users. There is, for example, evidence of police using the possession of condoms – an effective barrier against infection – as evidence to support an allegation of prostitution, and the possession of syringes as evidence to justify the arrest of drug users. The consequence of this is that sex workers wishing to avoid harassment and arrest may not carry condoms with them, thereby reducing the opportunity to practise safer sex, and drug users avoid carrying their own ‘works’, thereby increasing the possibility that they will share those of others and so increase their risk of infection with HIV and other blood-borne diseases.

These negative effects of traditional policing are increasingly recognised and efforts are being made to address them. An important milestone was reached in October 2014 at an international consultation on policing and HIV in Amsterdam, convened by the international Law Enforcement and HIV Network and co-organised by the Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health (a Melbourne-based social enterprise organisation), the International Development Law Organization, and the School of Law at Birkbeck. The consultation brought together more than 100 senior police officers from across



the world, representatives of key populations, policy-makers and academics. They heard from Michel Kazatchkine, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – regions in which unsafe drug use is a significant driver of HIV transmission. Among other things, Professor Kazatchkine emphasised the importance not only of legal reforms that promote rather than hinder public health, but of the work that can be done by law enforcement officers at street and community level to minimise risk.

Participants discussed the issues and came up with a number of priorities and recommendations. These included the need to build police knowledge and capacity, through training and the mainstreaming of public health approaches in police work; the strengthening of police-community relations and of mechanisms and practices of police accountability; and the directing of resources towards ensuring sustainable partnerships, effective communication channels and – a longer-term goal – effecting changes in police culture.

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**The School of Law has an internationally recognised reputation for legal research and scholarship that can contribute to progressive legal change.**

In recognition of the value of peer education, a number of serving and retired senior officers, from South America, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, were interviewed by me for a film that will be used in training and advocacy. Participants also agreed the Amsterdam Declaration on Police Partnerships for Harm Reduction. A significant document in the development of progressive and evidence-based policing practice, the Declaration commits its supporters to an approach to policing key populations that respects human rights, is informed by accepted principles of harm reduction (recognising, for example, the importance of clean injecting equipment for drug users), and which will promote rather than hinder health through active collaboration and partnership.

The involvement of the School of Law in supporting the Consultation and its outputs is a matter of considerable pride to me. For many years, my research has centred on the impact of law on HIV prevention and on the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS, and I have been privileged to work both nationally

and internationally on the reform of laws that hinder rather than assist efforts to end the global HIV epidemic. Much of this work has been focused on recommendations about the reform of the law ‘on the books’; and while this is important, the enforcement of law in practice is arguably even more so. The School of Law has an internationally recognised reputation for legal research and scholarship that can contribute to progressive legal change. In recent years, its capacity to build on this has been enhanced not only by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research and the International Centre for Prison Studies, both of which are now based in the School of Law, but by the successful development of its undergraduate and postgraduate provision in criminology and criminal justice. It was a privilege not only to showcase the School’s expertise in these areas at the consultation, but also to put its principles into practice.

Matthew Weait is Professor of Law and Policy and Pro-Vice-Master Academic and Community Partnerships.

Above right: A police car in action on Regent Street in London (Alamy)

# What the thunder said

Theatre gives psychologists insights into children's responses to community violence and bullying

Witnessing violent events in their community, in school, on television or in computer games can affect children's confidence and emotions, particularly if they are not given an opportunity to talk about what they have seen and how it made them feel.

Developmental psychologist Dr Natasha Kirkham, of Birkbeck's Department of Psychological Sciences, worked with colleagues at King's College London and the Theatre Centre in Shoreditch, east

London, to see whether theatre could play a role in helping children respond to violence around them.

Dr Kirkham and her colleagues, together with playwright Ed Harris, conducted a series of workshops and group interviews with Year Five pupils (aged nine to 10) at primary schools in 10 inner-city areas with high violent crime rates in London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Liverpool and Manchester. Harris then used material from these

**Below:** Dr Natasha Kirkham and Ed Harris conducted workshops in 10 inner-city primary schools



workshops to write a play, *What the Thunder Said*, which toured UK primary schools in March 2014. This play allowed the children, their parents and teachers to engage in a dialogue about the gap between what the children experience and what the adults see.

Dr Kirkham and fellow Birkbeck psychologist Dr Virginia Eatough analysed the words and expressions of the children in workshops and group interviews as part of the 18-month research project. Results showed a significant gap between the children's lived experience and their abstract understanding of the rules they are taught. Although they know the rules, they observe that the rules simply do not work a lot of the time. In addition, these children's threshold for behaving aggressively is low. Simply being 'annoyed' or having someone 'get on my nerves' can trigger an aggressive response. They commonly discuss vastly different types of aggressive behaviour as being equivalent. Murder and cussing can be spoken of in the same breath, with the same sense of importance. The implication is that these children perceive their world as dangerous and that confusion regarding appropriate behaviours and correct responses is constant.

Reflecting on the innovative approach used in this project, Dr Kirkham said: "This project opened my eyes to just how important it is for developmental scientists to get out of the lab and into the field, to shake up their methods, and to listen to individual children.

"These children all had thoughtful, strong opinions about the bullying in their environments. A more open dialogue between the children and the adults in their communities is clearly necessary.

"This experience was personally and professionally cathartic for me, offering new insights into modern-day parenting, coping strategies (for children and teachers), and developmental resilience. Ultimately, it proved to me that a lot of our ideas about how to deal with bullying need to be reworked."

# Au pairing in the UK – an open door to exploitation?



Study reveals need for guidelines to protect au pairs from poor working and living conditions

The UK is home to up to 90,000 au pairs at any one time. For many families, au pairs are the only workable solution to the 'childcare crisis'. However, often the experiences of au pairs and their host families don't match up to expectations.

After two years collecting and analysing data from au pairs and host families, Drs Rosie Cox and Nicky Busch, from the Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies,

are calling for guidelines that will protect au pairs from poor working and living conditions and give them a means of redress if they are ill-treated by host families.

The study found that the average au pair in the UK works over 38 hours a week, although some work up to 70 hours, with expected duties sometimes including caring for elderly relatives or helping out in family businesses. Average pay is £108

per week, but 14% of au pairs do not receive the £85 a week recommended by the British Au Pairs Agencies Association.

Au pairing was traditionally supposed to offer young people the opportunity for cultural exchange, but most hosts interviewed conceded that meeting childcare needs was their motivation for employing an au pair and many au pairs felt that hosts were not interested in providing opportunities for cultural exchange. 44% of those advertising for au pairs expected prior experience and 26% were only considering applicants who are already in the UK, showing that there is a decreasing differentiation between au pair and nanny roles.

The nationality of the au pair appears to influence how they are treated, with au pairs from western Europe generally working shorter hours and being given more opportunities for study and cultural exchange than those from central and eastern Europe.

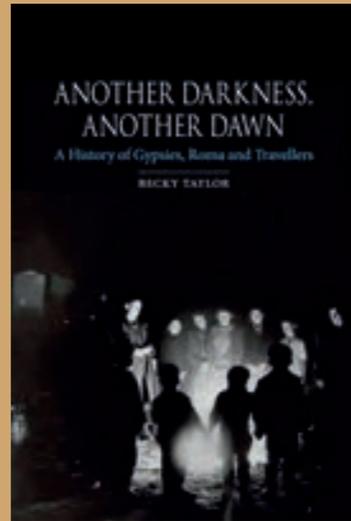
Dr Cox said: "Au pairs currently have no protection in terms of working hours, pay and living conditions. They are only affordable because au pairing is not recognised as work, while poor conditions are justified through discourses of cultural exchange and adventure. The government introduced guidelines in June 2014, but these contain vague terms which need clarification and they need to be backed up by providing au pairs with a means of redress if they find that they are being badly treated by their host family.

"The fact that so many families are reliant on au pairs and, in many cases, expect them to take on full-time care of very young infants highlights once again the need for access to flexible and affordable childcare. The government, and society at large, need to recognise that caring for children is valuable work, including when it is carried out in private homes. The people that do this work – including au pairs – should be recognised as workers and rewarded with appropriate wages and the respect they deserve."

*Au Pairs' Lives in Global Context. Sisters or Servants?*, edited by Dr Rosie Cox and published by Palgrave Macmillan, is out now.

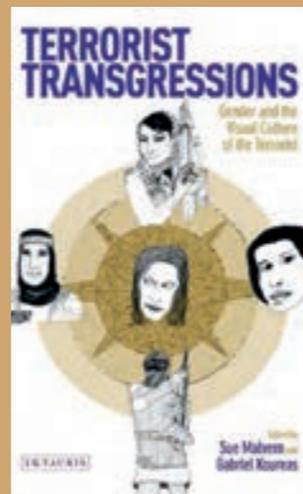
**Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers**  
Becky Taylor, Reaktion

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are some of the most marginalised and vilified people in society. Becky Taylor, Lecturer in History, charts their movement from the Indian subcontinent, across the Byzantine and Ottoman empires to western Europe and the Americas, to their place in the contemporary world. She sets Gypsies' experiences in the context of broader historical changes and demonstrates that history is not always about progress: the place of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers remains as contested today as it was upon their first arrival in western Europe in the fifteenth century.



**Exploring Intercultural Communication: Language in Action**  
Zhu Hua, Routledge

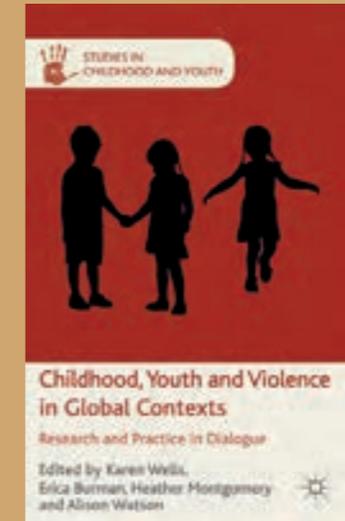
Investigating the role of language in intercultural communication, Zhu Hua, Professor of Applied Linguistics and Communication, brings together current and emerging themes in the field by examining how intercultural communication permeates our everyday life. She asks what we can do to achieve effective and appropriate intercultural communication, and why we study language, culture and identity together. Her focus is on the interactions between people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the interplay between cultural diversity and language practice.



**Childhood, Youth and Violence in Global Contexts**

Karen Wells, Erica Burman, Heather Montgomery and Alison Watson (eds), Palgrave Macmillan

The common-sense understanding of childhood as a protected space has led to violence against and by children being understood as spectacular or exceptional. In contrast, this collection, co-edited by Karen Wells, Senior Lecturer in International Development and Childhood Studies, shows how violence enters into ordinary, routine practices of childhood and children's experiences. It brings together academic and practitioner points of view to understand how violence is enacted against children in infancy, in school, in care, at home and on the street.



**The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: A Commentary**

Steve Peers, Tamara Hervey, Jeff Kenner and Angela Ward (eds), Hart

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union enshrines the key political, social and economic rights of EU citizens and residents in EU law. It was approved in 2000 by the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. However, its legal status remained uncertain until the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. This commentary on the Charter, the first in English, written by experts from several EU member states, provides an authoritative but succinct statement of how the Charter impacts on EU, domestic and international law. Co-editor Angela Ward is Visiting Professor of Law from the Court of Justice of the EU.

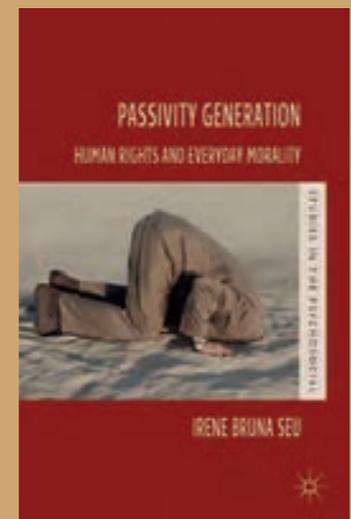
**Birkbeck books**  
2013–2014

A selection of books authored or edited by staff

**Passivity Generation: Human Rights and Everyday Morality**

Irene Bruna Seu, Palgrave Macmillan

"If only people knew, they would do something." Every day we see evidence that, when it comes to human rights violations, knowledge is not a guarantee of action. What stops people from doing more to protect human rights? What factors generate passivity? Or are we simply a passive generation? Irene Bruna Seu, Reader in Psychosocial Studies, addresses these questions and applies a mix of psychosocial methods to understand the complexity of emotional, cognitive and ideological responses to human rights violations.



**Terrorist Transgressions: Gender and the Visual Culture of the Terrorist**

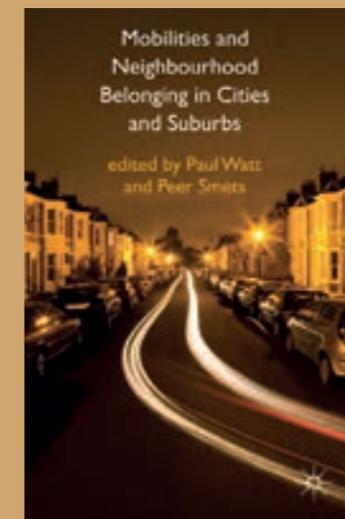
Sue Malvern and Gabriel Koureas (eds), IB Tauris

Terrorism has a variety of contexts, histories and forms, which have been the focus of intense scrutiny in recent years. Cultural representations of the terrorist have received much less attention. Dissident organisations create images of terrorists as martyrs, heroes or avengers, while international counterterrorist agencies visualise them to ensure the threat has a recognisable persona. Co-editor Gabriel Koureas, Lecturer in the History of Art, examines images of the terrorist and discusses how they challenge societal norms.

**Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman**

Hilary Fraser, Cambridge University Press

Hilary Fraser, who is the Geoffrey Tillotson Professor of Nineteenth-Century Studies at Birkbeck, sets out to correct received accounts of the emergence of art history as a masculine field. She investigates the importance of female writers in developing a discourse of art notable for its complexity and cultural power, its increasing professionalism and reach, and its integration with other discourses of modernity. Proposing a more flexible and inclusive model of what constitutes art historical writing, including fiction, poetry and travel literature, this book offers a radically revisionist account of the genealogy of a discipline and a profession.



**Mobilities and Neighbourhood Belonging in Cities and Suburbs**

Paul Watt and Peer Smets (eds), Palgrave Macmillan

Contemporary urban and suburban dwellers seem to be constantly on the move – commuting to work and travelling for leisure as well as moving house. Does this mean that people are rootless and lack a sense of belonging to particular places? Or does enhanced mobility co-exist with feelings of community and belonging? These questions are examined by co-editor Paul Watt, Senior Lecturer in Urban Studies, through case studies drawn from research in the cities and suburbs of Europe, North America and Africa.

# Our students



Our students choose Birkbeck for many different reasons, but they share a dedication to their studies and a determination to achieve

**Cansu Kucuk**  
MSc Marketing Communications,  
breast cancer survivor

“Birkbeck gave me a new lease of life. I had always wanted to return to university, but had kept putting it off and thought I was too old to go back. Once I was diagnosed with breast cancer in January 2012, I thought I can’t continue to put my dreams on hold. I went to the Open Evening the same day as I had one of my Zoladex injections.

“Studying was a great distraction from my cancer treatment and gave me something to focus on and enjoy. The cancer treatment meant I was unable to walk, my bones were weak and my concentration was poor, but I was desperate to continue with my studies. I saw Mark Pimm, Birkbeck’s Disability Service Manager (see page 37), and he told me to start accepting help so that I could achieve my best. Birkbeck really helped me with different coping techniques. I received a laptop, dictaphone and special software to help overcome my memory problems.”

**Chris Parker**  
Law (LLB), legal adviser, actor and presenter

“I thought I want to go and get an education and open up the opportunities available to me in broadcasting. I wanted to satisfy my thirst for knowledge and get into factual projects, as opposed to just entertainment broadcasting. Having always been interested in the law, I decided to go to a Birkbeck Open Evening and find out more. It was just meant to be – I love the law and now I feel like I have found my calling.”

“Birkbeck is a research-intensive university. You are taught by the authors of legal books and they are also practising solicitors and barristers. I have become engrossed by the law, and my studies have changed me as a person. People can now have two or three careers during their lives, and Birkbeck has helped me build my second career. I have also made great friends from the course. If you are thinking about studying at Birkbeck, go for it – you will not regret it.”

**Emma Lawley**  
Law (LLB), future trainee solicitor

“I have definitely achieved my ambition of working at a top City law firm thanks to Birkbeck. In 2013, I became the first paralegal recruited by Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP) from Birkbeck’s School of Law. A year later I was offered, and accepted, a training contract with BLP to commence in 2016.

“Birkbeck appealed to me because it is part of the University of London and because of the high calibre of teaching on offer. The evening teaching model was ideal as I was working and studying at the same time. It was a challenge combining work and study, but you quickly learn to manage your time effectively. The staff at Birkbeck are very accommodating and are always on hand to offer support.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Birkbeck, meeting new people and making strong friendships. The opportunities given to me by Birkbeck were absolutely brilliant – they really exceeded my expectations.”

**Michael Boampong**  
PhD Geography, former Migration and Youth Development Specialist for the United Nations

“Studying here will allow me to carry out my studies with supervision from people who have been trailblazers in their field, while developing relationships with great thinkers. I am sure that after this PhD, I will be equipped with thought-provoking development perspectives and become a better critical thinker and innovator. All the staff and students at Birkbeck have been very welcoming.

“As I come from Ghana, I would not have been able to afford living in London without the financial support from Birkbeck. The Anniversary Scholarship gives me peace of mind and enables me to concentrate on my PhD without having to look for paid work. I am being paid to learn – it is an excellent opportunity.

“Development discourse and issues in London greatly influence international development agendas. It is interesting to be right here and have some first-hand exposure to the governance and way of life here.”

**Tosh and Alison Moller**  
BSc Geology

Tosh said: “We looked at several universities, but the clincher was that Birkbeck’s course was accredited and offered 100 days in the field – none of the other universities could match that. I found the fieldwork particularly rewarding. There’s no substitute for looking at rocks up close and it’s satisfying to recognise their relationship in the field. It was a great bonus to be able to study, with my wife, the same subject at the same time. We were always studying for the journey, rather than the destination, but it was still very satisfying to graduate last year.”

Alison said: “I had never studied science before and that was a big challenge. Luckily, Tosh has a scientific background and most weeks after the lecture we would go through the material line by line at home and he would explain the geochemistry and geophysics to me. We had fantastic lecturers; it was a real joy and we looked forward to class every week. We do miss it now.”

**Kate Ruusuvoori**  
Certificate of Higher Education in Life Sciences for Subjects Allied to Medicine

“Before I started, I thought that I would be the oldest in the class and the only person studying in order to change career. In fact, I was neither. My classmates were fabulous and there was a massive cross-section of people. I made some great friends who I’m still in touch with three years later.

“The tutors were absolutely fantastic and really inspired me to go away from class and to learn more for myself. When the tutors were talking about their research in class, you could see them light up and they were so passionate about it that it made me realise that was what I wanted to do.

“The things I learnt at Birkbeck really prepared me for studying my undergraduate degree in BSc (Hons) Nutrition at King’s College London.

“Studying at Birkbeck definitely changed me and helped me to become a really dedicated and conscientious student. Now I want to get out there and apply my knowledge to a professional situation.”

For more student profiles, visit:  
[www.bbk.ac.uk/student-profiles](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/student-profiles)

# New Fellows

Honorary Fellowships are awarded to individuals who have attained distinction in academic or public life, who have rendered exceptional service, which may include philanthropic support, to Birkbeck, or who have, or have had, a close association with Birkbeck



## Professor Laurel Brake

Laurel Brake, Professor Emerita of Literature and Print Culture, is a distinguished scholar and author whose long affiliation with Birkbeck began in 1971, when she completed her doctorate at the College and took up a three-year Research Assistant post.

Returning in 1988 to head the Literature in English programme in Continuing Education, Professor Brake taught at Birkbeck for 20 years, before retiring in 2008 as Professor of Literature and Print Culture. During that time she helped to found the Certificate in Creative Writing, an interdisciplinary MA in Gender and the MA in Creative Writing.

Professor Brake served as a staff Governor and was for many years equal opportunities officer for the Association of University Teachers trade union. Since her formal retirement, Professor Brake has continued to teach an MA module at the University of London's Institute of English Studies and is involved in Birkbeck's Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies.

She said: "I was delighted, touched – and a little surprised! – to be invited to become a Fellow. I feel very deeply aligned to the Birkbeck mission, and being a Fellow is a lovely way for me to continue to be involved in that and to contribute to the College community."

## Mary Curnock Cook OBE

Mary Curnock Cook OBE joined the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) as Chief Executive in January 2010. She came to UCAS after six years at the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency.

From 1994 to 2001, Mary Curnock Cook was Chief Executive of BII, the professional body for licensed retailing. She served as a Council member on the Further Education Funding Council between 1997 and 2001, and was Chairman of award-winning e-learning company Creative Learning Media from 2002 to 2005. She has an MSc in General Management from the London Business School, and was awarded an OBE in the 2000 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to training in hospitality and tourism.

She said: "With some 20 years of experience working in secondary, vocational and now higher education, I am particularly proud to become a Fellow of a university which is pushing the boundaries of understanding learning and teaching through its education research programme and the Centre for Educational Neuroscience. This research is so fundamentally important – to be honest, I'd like to enrol right now. But then, enrolment- envy is an occupational hazard in my job and a Fellowship of Birkbeck is a truly wonderful alternative."

## Professor Philip Dewe

Professor Philip Dewe is Professor of Organizational Behaviour at Birkbeck. Having joined the College from Massey University in his native New Zealand in 2000, Professor Dewe also gave outstanding service to Birkbeck as Vice-Master for 11 years. Stepping down in summer 2014 now allows him more time for his research interests, while he continues to contribute to the College as Pro-Vice-Master for Special Projects.

Among Professor Dewe's many achievements as Vice-Master has been his work in Stratford, east London, which culminated in the opening of the University Square Stratford campus in November 2013.

He said: "It has given me enormous pleasure to see the completion of this milestone. Its existence is the fruit of many years spent exploring opportunities for widening participation, developing programmes that capture the aspirations of those living in east London, and developing our relationships within that community so that they may be able to become part of the wider Birkbeck community."

"That sense of belonging is important to all of us at Birkbeck. I am, of course, both delighted and honoured to become a Fellow, but I am particularly thrilled that this will allow me to continue to belong to Birkbeck and to continue to share in the mission that College founder George Birkbeck set out nearly 200 years ago. He talked in terms of 'universal access to the blessings of knowledge'; becoming a Fellow will allow me to continue to contribute to, and to share, that aspiration."

## Sir Alan Langlands

Sir Alan Langlands is Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds. Between 2009 and 2013 he was Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Prior to that, he was Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dundee (2000–2009) and Chief Executive of the NHS in England (1994–2000).

He has a particular interest in the scientific basis of health services and, from its inception in 2004 until 2012, he chaired the board of UK Biobank, a major genetic epidemiology study funded principally by the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council. Knighted in 1998 for his services to the NHS, Sir Alan is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences.

He said: "I have long been impressed by Birkbeck's pioneering role in adult education for working people. Its founder, George Birkbeck, was a professor of natural philosophy at the Andersonian Institute in my home town of Glasgow, and Birkbeck was founded in the Anderson tradition of a liberal education at the forefront of applied science and technology. Its success across the wide range of academic activity, from arts and humanities to social sciences and biological sciences, is testament to the great values of those early years."

## John McDonnell MP

John McDonnell has been the Member of Parliament for Hayes and Harlington since 1997.

His background is similar to that of many Birkbeck students, in that after leaving school he held a series of unskilled jobs before studying for his A-levels at night school, going on to study for a BSc in Government and Politics at Brunel University. He completed a Master's in Politics and Sociology at Birkbeck, while helping to run a children's home and working for the National Union of Mineworkers and then the Trades Union Congress.

Active in his local community as a grassroots campaigner, John McDonnell joined the Labour Party and was elected to represent his home constituency of Hayes and Harlington on the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1981, becoming Chair of Finance and Ken Livingstone's deputy leader. Following the abolition of the GLC, he joined Camden Borough Council as Head of its Policy Unit, later becoming Chief Executive of the Association of London Authorities and the Association of London Government. In Parliament, he is the Chair of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs.

John McDonnell said: "Birkbeck gave me the opportunity to explore a radical new world of ideas and it opened my eyes to the potential we have to change society."

## Peter Westley

Peter Westley has spent his career in the service of colleges of the University of London. After qualifying as an accountant in 1982, he joined University College London, before spending 16 years at the Institute of Education, where he was Deputy Finance Secretary.

He joined Birkbeck as Finance Secretary in 1994 and retired as Director of Finance early in 2014, having steered the College's finances prudently through turbulent times, including the collapse of the College's then investment banker, Barings, in 1995.

During the late 1990s, Peter Westley studied for a BA in Accounting and Management at Birkbeck, graduating with a First in 2000.

He said: "I wanted to refresh my knowledge and I am particularly pleased that I was able to do this at Birkbeck. I am now enjoying my retirement and the arrival of a grandson. I am immensely proud to have been offered a Fellowship and look forward to continue being involved with Birkbeck in the future."

For profiles of all Birkbeck's Fellows, visit: [www.bb.ac.uk/about-us/fellows](http://www.bb.ac.uk/about-us/fellows)

# Research into eating disorders in people with type 1 diabetes

Life for Jacqueline Allan, who has type 1 diabetes, has already been transformed by Birkbeck and she is now undertaking funded doctoral research

Jacqueline Allan has a remarkable story to tell and is extremely grateful to Birkbeck. She received a scholarship and first-class honours for her BSc in Psychology at the College, and is now continuing her studies at PhD level, thanks to one of Birkbeck's 20 Anniversary Scholarships for PhD students. The doctoral scholarships, which cover tuition fees and provide a stipend of £15,726 per year, were offered in 2013 to mark Birkbeck's 190th birthday.

Six years ago, Jacqueline started a charity called Diabetics with Eating Disorders to offer support to people suffering from diabulimia – an eating disorder in which a person with type 1 diabetes reduces their insulin intake to lose weight.

She said: "I knew that getting a psychology degree would be the best way to make a difference through my charity work and that was a driving force for me".

Jacqueline, who at the time suffered from diabulimia, delayed starting her undergraduate degree for a year so that she could make sure she was healthy enough to be successful. She credits her achievements at Birkbeck with playing an important part in her recovery, saying: "It's been totally transformative, and I feel completely different about myself. I now

get my value from my academic progress. That's what's kept me going – knowing that I'm improving all the time, and that what I do now is so much more important than what I look like. I can't really put it into words how grateful I am to Birkbeck. Birkbeck has turned my life around."

Jacqueline's PhD research looks at psychological risk and protective factors in variations of blood sugar in those with type 1 diabetes. She explained: "If blood sugar levels in people with type 1 diabetes are not controlled by daily insulin injections, then the body begins to destroy its own tissues. There are people with type 1 diabetes who deliberately omit to take their insulin in order to achieve rapid weight loss. This is incredibly dangerous and can lead to serious health complications and death. It is an eating disorder in its own right with a very different etiology and prognosis from anorexia and bulimia, but it remains largely unrecognised.

"My professional goals and my personal goals are one and the same thing now and when I actually stop and think about that, it's mind-blowing. My work is my PhD, but my PhD is done solely on behalf of people who have supported me and who I support."



Richard Burr has had a busy year. He was the bookies' favourite to win the BBC's *Great British Bake Off*, achieving the 'star baker' accolade five times during the series, but he narrowly missed out on taking the title in the final. His outstanding performances and affable personality mean that invitations to appear on television shows and to judge cake sales continue to pour in.

Richard gained a first-class BSc in Biodiversity and Conservation at Birkbeck in 2012. He was in the process of applying to a Master's degree in Geographic Information Science at the College, when he found out that he would be appearing on *Bake Off*.

Clearly someone who is not afraid of a challenge, Richard began his first degree at Birkbeck shortly before the birth of his first daughter, and by the time he graduated, he had a second daughter too. He also managed to combine evening study with new parenthood and running the family building business in north London.

Richard recalled: "One evening I mentioned to my wife that the first thing I'd do if I won the lottery would be to go to university and get a degree. From that moment on it became inevitable that I would end up at Birkbeck. My wife Sarah (née Bradshaw) studied for her Master's degree in London Studies there from 2001 to 2003 and loved it. And of course it's the 'go to' institution for people that work – it's perfectly set up to support people that have a life

## Building, baking and Birkbeck

Richard Burr's baked goods were a hit on television screens nationwide during *The Great British Bake Off* in 2014

outside of their studies."

Having dropped out of his first degree at another university, Richard was anxious about going back to study. He said: "After my first university experience I'd mentally assigned myself to the academic scrapheap. Birkbeck was so different

from my first time at university though – the tutors consistently made studying a joy.

"I don't think I would have applied for the *Bake Off* if I hadn't had the confidence boost that Birkbeck gave me and the experience of taking the plunge with something and it working out brilliantly. The *Bake Off* and evening study crossed over in a lot of ways as well. For both of them you need to be determined, work hard and love what you're doing."

The television series may now be over, but there are still opportunities arising from it, and Richard is also "trying to keep the family business spinning". Nor has he abandoned the idea of coming back to Birkbeck for his Master's degree. "I'm in a very lucky position," Richard mused. "I have three avenues open at the moment – building, baking and Birkbeck. At the moment I don't want to close off any of those, so I'm trying to live three lives at once!"



# From politics at Birkbeck to policy-making in Brussels

Studying at Birkbeck in the late 1980s helped Claude Moraes to form his political ideas and to launch his successful political career

Claude Moraes is a trailblazer in European politics. The Labour MEP was one of the first Asian MEPs to join the European Parliament in 1999, and in July 2014 he was re-elected for his fourth term. Still only 49, the London MEP is already one of the veterans of the European Parliament.

After studying law in his hometown of Dundee, Moraes decided, aged 21, to study an MSc in Politics and Administration at Birkbeck. He was attracted by the evening classes, as he could combine studying with working as an adviser to Labour MPs John Reid and Paul Boateng (now both Lords). He persuaded the late Ben Pimlott, then Professor of Politics and Contemporary History at Birkbeck, that, despite his youth, he was a suitable candidate for postgraduate study.

Moraes said: "I told Ben Pimlott what I had read and I managed to persuade him to admit me. Ben was a real politician's writer, as he combined journalism and serious writing with geeky politics."

However, juggling work and study was not straightforward. Moraes recalled, with affection, when he was hauled into the office of the late Paul Hirst, Professor of Social Theory. Hirst explained that there was a departmental sweepstake regarding the reasons for Moraes' absences, and he was putting his money on work-related visits to Scotland. Hirst wanted to know whether he had won the bet. Moraes confirmed that he was right – and made sure that he did not miss classes thereafter.



More than 25 years after completing his part-time studies at Birkbeck, Moraes still recognises the impact of his course on his career. He said: "My experiences at Birkbeck, including the influence of leading left-wing thinkers, have really shaped my career as a Labour politician. The course gave me a broader perspective, and I became more mature as I was studying with people older at the time."

Moraes is now the chairman of the European Parliament's influential and wide-ranging Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, which

Above: Claude Moraes canvasses ahead of European elections in May 2014 (Stuart C. Wilson/Getty Images)

tackles matters including immigration and asylum, cross-border crime, data regulation and anti-discrimination law.

He added: "The EU is about economic growth, but also about values – from democracy to the stewardship of the environment. Our challenges relate to how the EU handles austerity and how it addresses youth unemployment. Undoubtedly, the EU will stay together and grow, but the UK's position is uncertain. That day of reckoning is coming. I will be campaigning for the UK to stay in a reformed EU."



## The long view: reminiscing about university life since the 1950s

Birkbeck Fellow and former Chair of Governors Professor Michael Wise CBE MC looks back at a lifetime of teaching and research in London

From teaching geography to Birkbeck's students to working with a succession of Birkbeck's Masters, Professor Michael Wise has been part of the Birkbeck community for more than 50 years.

Now aged 96, Professor Wise joined the College's governing body in 1968, was Chair of Governors for six years in the 1980s, and became a Fellow in 1989. He retired as Emeritus Professor of Geography in 1985 after more than 30 years' teaching at the London School of Economics, and after a lifetime of distinguished contributions to the field of geography. A former President of the International Geographical Union and recipient of the Royal Geographical

Society Gill Memorial Award and Founder's Medal, Professor Wise was awarded the CBE in 1979.

While working at LSE, Professor Wise was recruited to the University of London intercollegiate lecture programme in 1952 by Birkbeck's then Professor of Geography, Sidney Wooldridge.

Professor Wise recalled: "These lectures were held at Birkbeck because it was central – students would come from all the different London colleges. They were held on a Friday and repeated in the evening for Birkbeck students, which wasn't too popular with my wife, because it meant I got home so late!

"I lectured in economic geography for

Left: Princess Anne visits Birkbeck (Birkbeck Archive)  
Below: Professor Michael Wise

my students during the day and then gave a similar lecture in the evening. Although it was a long day for me, I never had any reluctance from the students: Birkbeck students, being older, always seemed pleased to ask questions and have some discussion. I enjoyed teaching at Birkbeck very much, and was very pleased to be involved for so many years."

Over the years, Professor Wise has seen the College adapt to many changes and challenges, and he came to know a succession of Birkbeck's Masters.

"I knew Ronald Tress [Master from 1968 to 1977] well and then George Overend [1979–1987]," Professor Wise recalled. "As an economist, Tress took a broad approach to the subject, and was very keen on teaching – he was also good at responding to what students wanted. I liked him and got on well with him. He was a very good Master, as was Overend."

"It was the same with Tessa Blackstone [1987–1997], a very able Master of whom I saw a great deal and who I worked with closely over the years."

Now enjoying his retirement, Professor Wise attends Fellows' dinners and is delighted to still be a part of the Birkbeck community.



# Birkbeck during the Great War

## The resilience of Birkbeckians during World War One ensured that teaching continued at the College and led to individual battlefield honours

The unprecedented conflict of 1914 to 1918 had a profound impact upon life at Birkbeck and the lives of its staff, students and alumni. Special lectures at the College focused on patriotism and trench making, classes had to be abandoned because of Zeppelin air raids, and at least 530 Birkbeckians fought overseas. According to the roll of honour, 87 members of Birkbeck's community, including five past or present members of staff and one governor, were killed. In total, 55 honours and distinctions were awarded to Birkbeckians for service during the Great War.

The details of Birkbeck's history during this turbulent period are all recorded in the minutes of College meetings and Birkbeck's annual reviews – the early twentieth-century predecessors of *BBK* magazine. The documents, stored in the archives in Malet Street, pay tribute to the fallen and describe in frank terms what life was like during the Great War, when Birkbeck was based at Brems Buildings, Fetter Lane, in the City of London.

The College took swift and uncompromising action to support the war effort following the outbreak of hostilities on 4 August 1914. On 17 August, a special joint meeting of the executive, finance and alterations committee was convened, and it resolved to leave posts open and to continue to pay salaries (minus naval or military pay) to staff away on active service. At another committee meeting in October 1914, it was resolved that “no German or Austrian student be allowed to attend the College during the war”.



Left: An airship over St Bride's Church, off Fleet Street in London, a short distance from Birkbeck's home at the time in Brems Buildings, Fetter Lane (Mary Evans Picture Library).

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According to the 1914-1915 annual review, John Charles Bigham, 1st Viscount Mersey, delivered an “eloquent and impressive address on War and Patriotism”, which was followed by many enlistments, including to the College Officers' Training Corps. In the same report, references are made to students enlisting for “special chemical work in the Army” in response to a call from the War Office.

Birkbeck staff, students and alumni joined the forces during the war, including the inspirational and pioneering Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan CBE DSc, who received the CBE honour because of her wartime service. As well as being Birkbeck's first female professor, and a prominent botanist and mycologist, she served as the Controller of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in France and was the Commandant of the Women's Royal Air Force.

Other individuals mentioned in the annual reviews include Captain Sidney Eames MC, who was appointed Chief Instructor at a Trench Mortar and Bombing School in France, and HN Dale Richards BSc, a former assistant in the Zoology Department, who joined the navy as a surgeon and was killed in the Mediterranean when his ship was torpedoed.

The sadness and severity of the losses incurred during the war were referred to year after year in the annual reports: “The College, like other educational institutions, has suffered under the blight of war” (1914-1915); “The College may feel a pride mingled with sadness at the loss of these promising lives” (1915-1916); and “The death of so many strong and promising young men brings home to the College the supreme sacrifice this country is making of its best and bravest in the course of justice and honour (1916-1917).”

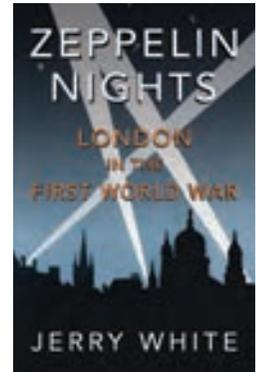
Despite the horrors and perils of war, soldiers still read and exhibited a desire to learn at the front. According to the annual review of 1917-1918: “It is noteworthy and of excellent augury for the future that in the army on the Continent books of study and literary pursuits have proved the best form of relief during periods of quiescence”.

The global conflict and fighting overseas directly affected Birkbeck. The College provided assistance and free education to Belgian refugees, about a dozen of whom attended classes. Zeppelin raids also led to classes being suspended at Birkbeck on the first evening of the academic year in 1917. Student numbers halved from 930 in 1913-1914 to 465 in 1917-1918. Female students also outnumbered male

students in 1917-1918 (the figures were 239 and 226 respectively) as more and more men were recruited to the battlefield.

Despite the “disaster” of war, the annual reviews document how teaching and learning continued at Birkbeck. The report from 1915-1916 reads: “The College has adapted itself to the changed conditions, and with slight modifications, has fulfilled its regular functions”. Three years later, a similar sentiment was echoed in the latest report: “During the war all the regular courses of instruction were maintained with marked success, in spite of difficult conditions due more particularly to shortage of staff”.

**Zeppelin Nights:  
London in the  
First World War**  
Jerry White,  
The Bodley Head



Award-winning London historian Jerry White, Professor of History at Birkbeck, launched his book *Zeppelin Nights* in May 2014. The scholarly work, which won the Spear's Prize for Social History Book of 2014, explains how London was transformed by the Great War. Munitions were manufactured in the capital's factories, wounded soldiers were treated in its hospitals, and London came under air attack for the first time. As well as the horrors of the conflict, London experienced an economic boom linked to the war effort, the end of Victorian levels of poverty, the growth of opportunities for women in the labour market, and the shift towards manufacturing in the capital's western suburbs.

Listen to a podcast interview with Professor Jerry White at: [www.bbk.ac.uk/birkbeckvoices/episode21](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/birkbeckvoices/episode21)

# Obituaries

Professor Patrick McAuslan and Professor Sir Graham Hills are among the Birkbeck staff and Fellows remembered

## Professor Patrick McAuslan MBE (1937–2014)

### Pioneering Professor of Law

Patrick McAuslan MBE was a member of the team that established the Birkbeck Law School in 1993, where he taught and researched until his death in January 2014. He was a pioneer and world expert in land law, law reform, sustainable development, the alleviation of poverty and planning law.

In a tribute to Professor McAuslan, Professor Costas Douzinas, Professor of Law and Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, said: “Patrick studied at Oxford University and taught at the LSE, Warwick, UCL and Birkbeck. His Birkbeck Professorial Inaugural Address was his fourth, but he proudly stated that the reception afterwards was the best. His courses in planning, environmental and land law changed mainstream perceptions, as did his classic *Ideologies of Planning Law* (1980).

“But his legacy remains the lifelong commitment to social justice and development through land reform, and his love affair with Africa. It started in 1961, when Patrick and William Twining established the first African Law School in Dar es Salaam, where he taught for five years.

“In 1993, Patrick was appointed Land Management Co-ordinator of the UN-Habitat Urban Management Programme in Nairobi, starting a long career of advising governments on land management reform. He acted as an advisor for the UN, the World Bank, the European Union and Department for International Development among others. Patrick



visited 35 countries to advise on land management and alleviation of poverty, and contributed to land reform in many of those. Indeed there are not many developing world countries or ‘difficult’ places he did not visit as an advisor.

“His land policy work has been documented in his prolific writing. His recent books include *Land Law Reform in Eastern Africa: Traditional or Transformative?* and *Bringing the Law Back In: Essays in Land, Law and Development*. It is no exaggeration to call Professor McAuslan the father of postcolonial land law.”

## The Rt Hon the Lord Barnett PC (1923–2014)

### Former Labour Cabinet minister

Lord Joel Barnett was educated in Manchester and began his working life as an accountant. Elected as the Member of Parliament for Heywood and Royton in 1964, he went on to serve as Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 1974–1979, working closely with Denis Healey in the Callaghan government. During this time he devised the system for allocating public spending to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which became known as the ‘Barnett formula’ – something he always considered a ‘temporary fix’.

He was made a life peer in 1983 as Baron Barnett of Heywood and Royton in Greater Manchester, and his public appointments included Vice-Chairman of the BBC. He was made a Fellow of Birkbeck in 1992 and a year later became Chairman of the Birkbeck College Appeal, running the College’s fundraising campaign from 1993–1996.

## Sir Peter Hall (1932–2014)

### Leading expert in town planning

Geographer Sir Peter Hall was Professor of Planning and Regeneration at The Bartlett, University College London, and President of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). Knighted for his services to the TCPA in 1998, he was renowned for his work on the economic, demographic, cultural and management issues that face cities around the globe.

Top: Sir Peter Hall  
Below, left:  
Professor Patrick  
McAuslan  
Below, right:  
Professor Sir  
Graham Hills

During the 1990s he was involved in public policy, advising the then Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine on the early vision for the Thames Gateway and Channel Tunnel rail link.

Peter Hall gained a Master’s and doctorate in geography at St Catharine’s College, Cambridge, and began his academic career at Birkbeck in 1957 as an Assistant Lecturer in Geography. He had an early fascination with the historical development of London and its traditional industries in the East End. He later became Professor of Geography at the University of Reading, latterly also becoming Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He took up the chair of Planning at The Bartlett in 1989. He was awarded a Birkbeck Fellowship in 2012.

## Professor Sir Graham Hills (1926–2014)

### Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Strathclyde

Visionary university leader Professor Sir Graham Hills won a scholarship to his local grammar school but left with the equivalent of O-levels when his family were bombed out of their home during the Second World War.

He had to take work as a laboratory assistant at chemical company May and Baker, from where he gained practical experience of industry that informed his academic career. Colleagues encouraged him to enrol at Birkbeck, and despite the College being hit in bombing raids, he completed his BSc in Chemistry in 1946 and received his PhD from Birkbeck in 1950. The experience led to him becoming a persuasive advocate for widening access to higher education.

A lecturing post at Imperial College was followed in 1962 by a Chair in Physical Chemistry at the University of Southampton. He later became the university’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor before being appointed to Strathclyde as Principal and Vice-Chancellor in 1980. His academic achievements were recognised with a knighthood in 1988 and through many fellowships and honorary degrees. He was made a Birkbeck Fellow in 1984.

## Dame Phyllis Somers (1922–2014)

### Philanthropist

Birkbeck Fellow Dame Phyllis Somers died peacefully at her home on Jersey in March 2014, aged 92. Widow of airline tycoon JN ‘Nat’ Somers, Dame Phyllis was made a Fellow of Birkbeck in recognition of her philanthropic support of Birkbeck’s Biomedical Chemistry Laboratory in the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences.

Her philanthropic contributions to Birkbeck over more than a decade of involvement in the College also included support for the Learning Information Centre in 2005. Most recently she gave support to Birkbeck’s undergraduate bursary scheme.

Dame Phyllis was an extremely generous philanthropist who made a lasting difference to many people’s lives through her support for medical research and social welfare charities in Jersey, the UK and the US. Her financial support and personal energy especially benefited Cancer Research UK. She received a DBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours in 2013 in recognition of her work for charitable services.

The Master of Birkbeck, Professor David Latchman, said: “I first met Dame Phyllis when I was Dean of the Institute of Child Health at Great Ormond Street Hospital, of which she was a generous supporter. Following my move to Birkbeck, I was delighted that she was as understanding of Birkbeck’s unique mission, and I was most grateful for her support. The College and students benefited greatly from her generosity and interest.”

Birkbeck has also been saddened to learn of the deaths of other members of the College community, including staff member Ken Brown, Network Services Analyst; Birkbeck Fellow Lord Heyhoe; former Reader in Psycholinguistics Professor Heather van der Lely; former Fellow Jack Jacobs; former College Registrar Horace Law (Jock) Snaith; and former College Secretary Mr Robert Swainson.

For more obituaries, visit: [www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-community/tributes](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-community/tributes)

# Why I give

Hedge fund manager Geraldine Sundstrom improved her prospects by studying at Birkbeck – and she is now helping others to reach their goals too

When I visited Birkbeck in October 2014, I was a bit disorientated at first. The grand entrance in Malet Street, which I last went through to sit my exams, has become the goods entrance. That is when I realised that many years have passed – and much has changed – since I was studying for my MSc in Finance (1996–1998) at Birkbeck. The main entrance has moved to Torrington Square, next to the impressive five-floor, glass-fronted library, yet the primary mission of Birkbeck as a world-class provider of higher education, taught in the evenings and catering for part-time students, still remains.

I enjoyed the unique opportunity to study for my Master's degree part-time, while being a professional and earning a living. When it comes to providing a fair and equal chance for all, not much can match Birkbeck's dedication to part-time students. Generations have been able to enjoy this unique opportunity.

Part-time study can be challenging. Running a professional life, student life, personal life, and sometimes supporting a family, can be incredibly demanding, verging on heroic in some cases. I almost gave up my studies halfway through because they were so hard at times. My days started at 7am at my desk in the City and typically I wasn't back home till 10pm after my studies at Birkbeck. The highlight of my day was often my evening break at the Birkbeck cafeteria, chatting with my understanding classmates, some of whom are now friends for life.



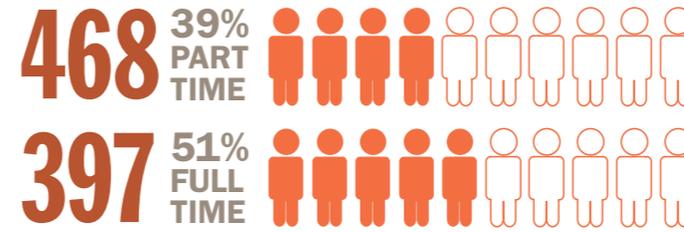
Getting my postgraduate degree in 1998 was enriching, a fantastic door-opener and an experience that truly made me ready to embark on my career. I am ever so glad and proud to have finished my studies.

Almost two years ago I was approached by Chris Murphy, Head of Development and Alumni at Birkbeck. He was eager to find out about my experiences at Birkbeck, their impact on my career, and whether I would be interested in donating to Birkbeck. I didn't hesitate, as I admire people who take on the

challenge of part-time study to build a better future. It seemed natural for me to give some support, particularly for undergraduate student bursaries. If my donation can make a little difference, bring comfort or simply peace of mind, and help one more Birkbeck student to reach graduation, I will feel privileged. That's why I am giving to Birkbeck.

To donate to Birkbeck, to volunteer or to find out more, visit: [www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni)

# Birkbeck in numbers

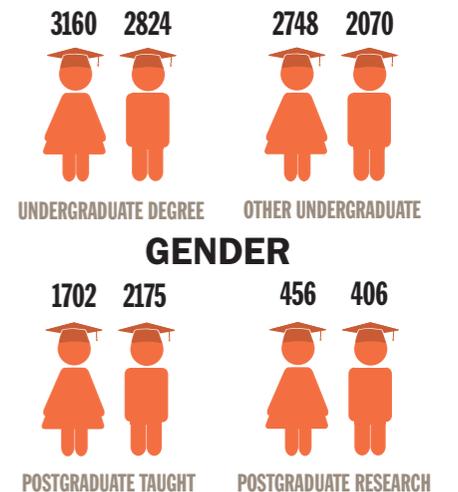
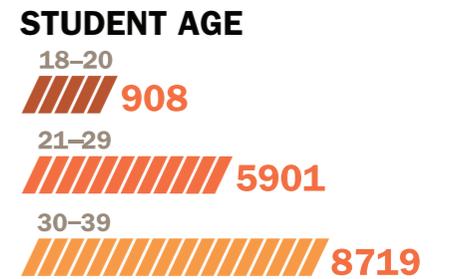
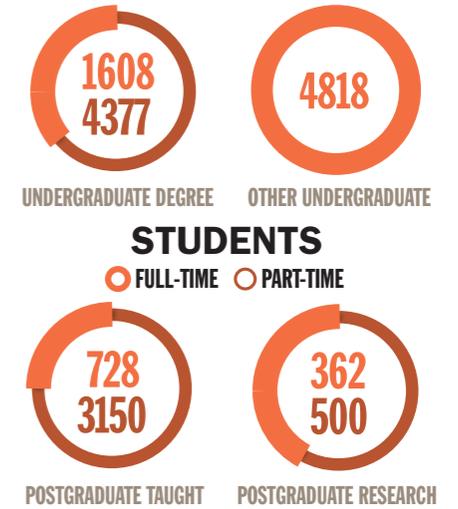


UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN RECEIPT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**1372** ALUMNI DONATED £360,000  
**NEW INCOME FOR ALUMNI FUND** £205,352

**1800** DONORS GAVE A TOTAL OF £1.1M  
**ELIGIBLE STUDENTS RECEIVE £1000 CASH BURSARIES**

**BIRKBECK SUPPORT TO STUDENTS** £2.86M  
**FIRST TIME DONORS TO ALUMNI FUND** 360



# The last word



Mary Curnock Cook, Chief Executive of UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, relishes becoming a Birkbeck Fellow and joining the flexible learning revolution

I am delighted to have become a Fellow of Birkbeck this year and to discover that, four years after London's 'evening university' joined UCAS' undergraduate admissions scheme, I am now part of an ongoing revolution.

I had long been an admirer of how Birkbeck opened the gateway to higher education for those determined and motivated enough to combine degree study with day-to-day life. The stories of mature students choosing Birkbeck were remarkably similar to my own; people for whom higher education wasn't right or practical at 18, starting careers and families, then realising it was now or never. I went to university in my 40s and

it was more precious to me then, because it was a purposeful and fully committed decision.

But it was only when I looked at Birkbeck's record-breaking UCAS acceptances over recent cycles that I knew something else must be going on too. Something incredible has happened at Birkbeck in recent years.

While 'part-time' numbers were falling across the higher education sector, numbers on Birkbeck's innovative full-time evening undergraduate programmes grew by a staggering 308% between the 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 cycles, according to acceptances recorded by UCAS. The appeal of its

intensive full-time courses - proving that career development and study are not mutually exclusive - has soared beyond what we might previously have thought of as its natural constituency.

Nearly 30% of new students this year were aged 18-20, and I know many universities and colleges in the UCAS scheme will be taking notice of the way Birkbeck has communicated its vision to students, backed up by a brilliantly coordinated offering.

Birkbeck's portfolio of intensive, three-year evening undergraduate courses has been rapidly expanded to a total of 51 programmes available in the academic year 2014-2015. Its full-time evening offer is an innovative model that opens access to higher education for the students around whose needs it was designed.

It is such a privilege to be invited to become a Birkbeck Fellow. I find myself in distinguished company with many others who, like me, are impassioned about access to the rich rewards of higher education for people who, for a variety of reasons, don't fit the normal template of school-A level-university.

Walk around Birkbeck in the evening as the lights go on and you'll see parents taking control of their future alongside younger people determined to blend work with study. They're all studying a subject they love, while juggling life's necessary commitments. This fills me with optimism for the future of higher education.



## bbk issue 33

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# Keep informed and stay in touch

We hope you have enjoyed reading about our year in this edition of BBK. There are many ways that you can stay connected with us throughout 2015 and beyond.

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Birkbeck is a world-class research and teaching institution, a vibrant centre of academic excellence and London's only specialist provider of evening higher education.



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