

# bbk



## **'THE DARK LADY OF DNA'**

Rosalind Franklin steps into the limelight

## **TOWARDS OUR THIRD CENTURY**

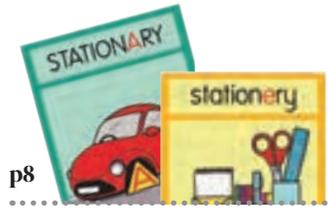
Your ideas wanted

## **BACK FROM THE DEAD**

The cultural rebirth of zombies

**BIRKBECK'S MAGAZINE**  
REVIEW 2015  
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The constancy of our commitment to London and its people is unique and worth celebrating. We are very proud to be a research-intensive university like no other.

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In higher education policy at least, the government elected in May 2015 has confirmed politicians can do a lot in a short space of time.

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## Building on the past, looking to the future



This year has been a year of continued transition and adaptation for Birkbeck. In an election year, with a new government in power, the environment in which universities operate has already changed a great deal – and will no doubt continue to change in the years ahead.

In this issue, we look ahead at how the new government might impact higher education, with Nick Hillman, Director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, laying out the main implications (p54), while Dr Rosie Campbell, from the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy, looks at the race for women voters (p30-31) during the General Election.

Central to Birkbeck's ethos is reaching out to communities under-represented in higher education and ensuring that anyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to benefit from further study.

This year, the College has built a new partnership with the London Borough of Haringey to bring Birkbeck's expertise in widening participation to Tottenham, and we explore how this might contribute to changing the prospects of the area's residents in the years ahead (p6-7).

We have also seen successes of the past – such as the introduction of three year, full-time evening degrees – become the successes of today, with the largest

ever cohort of students graduating from the College this year (p4-5). This is a momentous achievement for all the students who have realised their ambition to study with us, as well as representing a fundamental vote of confidence in the value of the approach to learning that Birkbeck offers.

As ever, rather than resting on our laurels, we are continually looking at how we can expand the richness of the experience we offer our students, to make their time at Birkbeck one which stays with them for life, both personally and professionally.

We look at a new teaching lab that will be a game-changer for teaching geology (p10-11) and we meet some of our entrepreneurial students who are benefiting from a new suite of programmes aimed at encouraging small businesses to flourish (p8-9).

After *Photograph 51* starring Nicole Kidman as Rosalind Franklin came to the London stage in 2015, we take a look at Dr Franklin's legacy. She was based at Birkbeck for the final five years of her life, before her untimely death from cancer at the age of 37. Her life and contribution to knowledge have left a profound legacy, for Birkbeck as well as women in science, and in this issue we explore the contemporary resonance of her work in pushing these boundaries for academia today (p44-45).

Finally, in looking at the past we also look ahead to the 200th anniversary of the College's foundation (p14-15), with an intriguing snapshot of how the College's centenary was celebrated back in 1923 to inspire you to share your ideas of how you think we should mark this momentous occasion. Please do share your thoughts.

Henry Rummins, Editor

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# Master's report



Professor David Latchman CBE

This academic year, 2014–2015, has been a positive one for Birkbeck. Our constant hunt for innovative new ways to realise Birkbeck's almost 200-year-old mission of enabling working Londoners to gain a high-quality education has proved particularly successful this year.

Birkbeck has changed a great deal since it was established at a meeting in a pub on London's Strand in 1823. As we move towards our third century, we continually strive to reach our 200th anniversary in 2023 as an institution which George Birkbeck would not only recognise, but be proud of.

In the spirit of our Founder we are taking an entrepreneurial approach to enable more Londoners than ever to join the vibrant Birkbeck community and to continually improve the experience of studying here at the College once they arrive.

This year saw the College's largest-ever graduating cohort of 1,600 students step into a new future after studying at Birkbeck. The unprecedented number of graduates follows our decision a few years ago to increase the provision of intensive, full-time, three-year evening degrees and to make these degrees available through UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

Since the academic year 2012–2013, when the College had 21 full-time, three-year evening degrees, we have expanded this provision threefold to 69 programmes in 2015–2016.

George Birkbeck wanted working Londoners to come to Birkbeck, and we are working harder than ever to

enable people from non-traditional backgrounds to come and study here. This year marks the beginning of an exciting new project, Building Bridges to Birkbeck, delivered in partnership with the London Borough of Haringey (see p6). Together, we are reaching out to disadvantaged communities in the borough through a series of accessible and engaging workshops, lectures and introductory sessions.

Building Bridges to Birkbeck offers Haringey residents the opportunity to take our Higher Education Introductory Studies (HEIS) programme, and from there to transition onto degree-level programmes at the College. We believe that this model, widening participation in university education, could be applied throughout the London boroughs.

It has always been our ambition that, by our milestone 200th birthday, every Birkbeck student will be taught on premises either owned by Birkbeck or used exclusively by the College in the evening. With this aim in mind, Birkbeck has acquired the substantial Cambridge House building on nearby Euston Road, significantly increasing our space, and enabling us to concentrate teaching on our main Malet Street campus.

The Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences goes from strength to strength with a new £1.3m laboratory (see p10) which, we believe, is unrivalled for teaching geology anywhere in the country. The new lab includes cutting-edge mineral analysis technology, 67 microscopes, and a computer monitor for each student, as well as an electron microscope installed in Malet Street for the first time.

A major draw of students to Birkbeck is our reputation as a research-intensive institution, a status confirmed by the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the results of which were published in December 2014. Of research submitted for assessment by the College, 73% was rated either 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent', the top two categories.

To build on our position as a centre for robust and subject-leading research, we have continued to invest in research facilities, including with a recent £200,000 donation from the Garfield Weston Foundation for further investment in the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development.

With the general election in 2015, we are witnessing considerable change in higher education policy. With change comes opportunity, and Birkbeck is working with partners across the sector to advocate for increased support for combining work with study.

The number of students studying part-time nationally has halved since 2010–2011, a considerable loss, personally, financially and culturally, to prospective students across the country who have not had the chance to upskill or reskill

Below: The College's founder, George Birkbeck



into a new career. But it is also a loss to the UK as a whole: part-time study is a key opportunity to upskill the workforce and to impact positively on our economy and international competitiveness.

Birkbeck's central London location and our status as an evening-only provider of higher education give us in-depth insight into ways in which this decline can be reversed. We believe that combining work with study should be considered as a high-quality, flexible option for students of all ages and backgrounds,

and that it should be well supported and resourced by government.

This year, we have advocated consistently for part-time learning, including responding to a request for policy proposals from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and briefing Members of Parliament.

We have advocated, too, that businesses should be able to use the proposed Apprenticeships Levy to fund part-time university study by their employees.

As the Government's policy on higher

Above: Graduates celebrate outside Birkbeck's Malet Street building after ceremonies in November 2015

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This year saw the College's largest-ever graduating cohort of 1,600 students step into a new future after studying at Birkbeck.  
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education develops in the years ahead, we will, as we have always done, remain dynamic in safeguarding the unique model of work and study that Birkbeck offers.

Our community of working Londoners have appreciated the opportunities that Birkbeck offers for life-changing education for nearly two centuries, and we will ensure that our university is an exciting and fulfilling place of learning for many more generations of Londoners to come.

# Building bridges in Haringey



A new partnership in Haringey is helping to reinvigorate aspirations in the borough

In a first for London, Birkbeck has launched a new partnership with Haringey Council, Bridges to Birkbeck, to inspire residents in the borough into higher education to improve their career prospects.

Based in the 639 High Road Enterprise Centre in Tottenham, the programme includes a series of workshops designed to inspire, engage and challenge participants to give them an idea of what higher education is like and how it can play a critical role in supporting people to achieve their career ambitions. Lectures, professional guest speakers and career planning workshops will take place alongside UCAS application advice to support prospective students with the process of applying.

The Enterprise Centre is funded by the Mayor of London and run by local charity London Youth Support Trust. It has been restored to create a new centre, as part of the Mayor of London and Haringey Council's £41m regeneration programme.

The listed building suffered fire damage during the 2011 riots which shook Tottenham and nearby Wood Green, with widespread damage to property and looting. Commentators were mixed on the causes of the disorder, but themes including economic decline, social exclusion and poverty became recurrent.

Vicky Clark, Head of Economic Development and Growth at Haringey Council, said Birkbeck's presence in the borough will have a major impact on the Council's plans to regenerate the area. "Of course we want to achieve physical regeneration for Tottenham – but just as important is transforming what people living in the area feel they can achieve," she said.



Vicky continued, "Birkbeck's presence in Tottenham is absolutely vital to contributing to this goal of raising aspirations. Having a research-intensive institution like Birkbeck making a definite and comprehensive commitment to the area is also a powerful statement of confidence which will have knock-on effects, we hope, in attracting businesses and investor support into Haringey, too."

As part of the regeneration initiative, Birkbeck is offering residents who participate the opportunity to progress onto its Higher Education Introductory Studies (HEIS) course, a fast-track programme designed to facilitate entry to university. Students who undertake this course will also be offered a £3,000 bursary towards their study – halving the cost of the first year of their degree.

The HEIS course provides an opportunity to explore a specific subject, such as business, prior to choosing what to study. This is designed to be a gradual introduction to university-level study, helping prospective undergraduate students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that they will need to perform well in higher education.

The curriculum on offer in Tottenham will initially be linked to business – in line with the initiative's aim to improve career prospects, transferable skills and

entrepreneurship in the borough – before broadening out to other subjects.

Students will have access to Birkbeck's professional network, giving them the opportunity to learn about starting their own business or social enterprise. They will also have support from the College's current students and alumni, who can provide professional expertise and advice in order to help them succeed.

"We're delighted to be partnering with Haringey on an innovative, ground-breaking project alongside their substantial regeneration plans for the borough," explained Caroline McDonald, Head of Widening Access and Retention at Birkbeck. "In time, we hope this will be a model which we can transfer to other local authorities in London, having demonstrated its success in Tottenham."

Councillor Joe Goldberg, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Social Inclusion and Sustainability at Haringey Council, said: "A child born in Tottenham today should have opportunities equal to the best in London, and that a university of Birkbeck's calibre wants to open here is a vote of confidence in our borough's reputation for rewarding aspiration".

For more information, visit [bbk.ac.uk/prospective/outreach](http://bbk.ac.uk/prospective/outreach)

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I would say to people that are thinking that higher education is not for them that they really need to rethink.

Eduardo Araujo (below) is one Tottenham resident who has already benefited from Birkbeck's approach to higher education, having enrolled on the College's BSc Community Development and Public Policy programme while holding down a full-time job.

He said: "The best thing about studying at Birkbeck was the really strong student community ethos, and that really helped."

Given his work and family commitments, adding study into the mix was challenging, but ultimately rewarding for Eduardo.

"Comparing the amount of coursework and the requirements with other people I know who were studying at the same time at other institutions, it seems that my challenge was a lot bigger than everyone else's. I think that every time you have to rise to the occasion with Birkbeck and it's great to have those expectations."

Offering advice to prospective students, Eduardo added: "I would say to people that are thinking that higher education is not for them that they really need to rethink. There's no harm in bettering yourself – you will do everything just that little bit better; you'll manage your life better, you'll stand out at your job, whatever that is and you'll be that person that will be self-motivated because you look at life slightly differently to everyone else."

Far left: An 'I love Tottenham' banner hangs on Tottenham High Road. The campaign was launched in the wake of the 2011 riots, and was aimed at encouraging people to support local firms (Alamy)

Above, left: The Enterprise Centre in Tottenham  
Right: Student and Tottenham resident Eduardo Araujo



# Birkbeck means business

Entrepreneurs at Birkbeck are going from strength to strength, thanks to an expanding package of support offered through the School of Business, Economics and Informatics and Birkbeck Careers

When it was time to pursue her long-standing dream of starting her own business, Fiona Button knew that Birkbeck would give her the scientific knowledge and the business skills to make it a reality.

“I did the Master’s degree [in Educational Neuroscience] because I wanted a solid, academic, evidence-based approach to underpin my business. The opportunity to develop my skills through doing a dissertation – I’m researching children’s spelling strategies – will be invaluable. I also wanted to tap into the institutional support I’d heard Birkbeck offers entrepreneurs,” said Fiona.

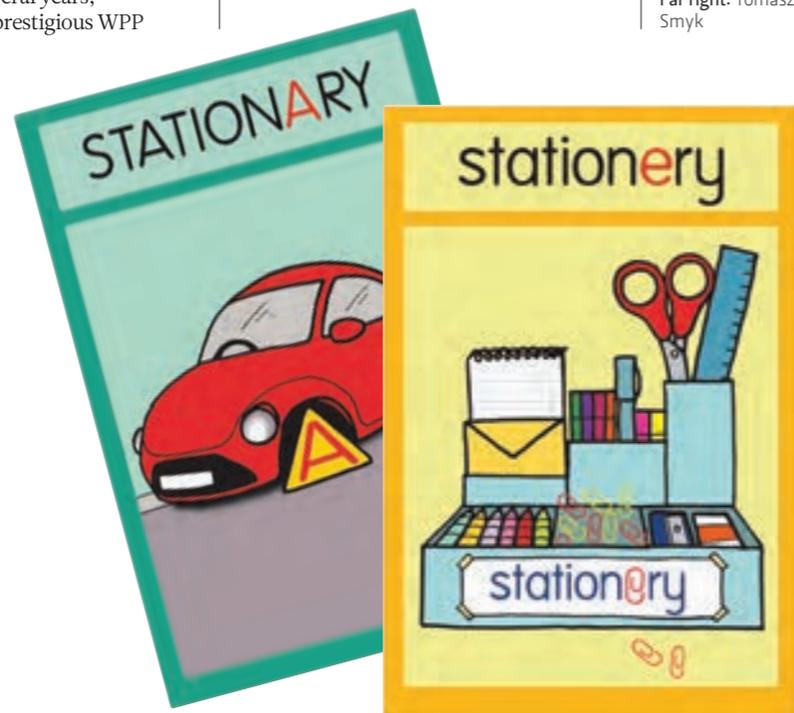
After her first degree, Fiona worked in marketing for several years, starting out on the prestigious WPP

Fellowship, which gave her experience of working across a range of digital and advertising agencies. Fiona specialised in copywriting, which led to teaching business writing, and then to teaching literacy to adults. It was from here that the idea for her business – developing better teaching resources for literacy – was born.

Fiona is currently developing the first product for her business, Button Learning. It is a method that helps readers to remember difficult spellings using colourful illustrations, which is rooted in her professional experience as well as what she is learning through the Master’s programme.

Below: Two of the illustrated cards produced by Button Learning (© Button Learning)

Right: Fiona Button  
Far right: Tomasz Smyk



## Encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset

Fiona is one of a growing number of students who are planning, or already running, their own businesses when they come to study at Birkbeck. In response, the College has developed Enterprise Pathways, a programme of comprehensive support for aspiring entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey.

A non-credit-bearing enterprise elective module for students interested in running their own business or already doing so was also offered for the first time in summer 2015. More than 30 students attended the series of nine sessions giving an introduction on how to build an entrepreneurial mindset.

“The focus of our activities includes developing business, finance and marketing plans, team building, idea generation and creating an enterprising mindset,” explained Rose Devaney, Business Engagement and Impact Manager at the School of Business, Economics and Informatics at Birkbeck.



“We have cohorts who are just setting out on their entrepreneurial journey, alongside those who have established businesses and are looking to accelerate. More recently, we have developed the programme to include bootcamps, one-to-one coaching support and a week of events to celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week.”

It was a few months into studying at Birkbeck when Fiona Button made contact with the Business Engagement team to access the support that Birkbeck offers to students keen to start their own enterprises. “I’ve had great support at Birkbeck for Button Learning,” she said. “For example, given that the products are very visual, I had lots of questions about intellectual property. My mentor at Birkbeck immediately put me in touch with an IP specialist. Even with all the support I’ve had, I still feel there’s a lot more there I haven’t used yet.”

## Tailored advice

Tomasz Smyk, 35, is another student who has benefited from the programme, having started his business Get a Free Quotation Ltd – designed to make it easier for people working in the construction sector to source quotes for building work – while studying a part-time MSc International Management at Birkbeck.

“I attended an enterprise bootcamp organised by Birkbeck which enabled me to start my business,” recalled Tomasz. “The guys leading the bootcamp were young and enthusiastic and what they said about starting a business was inspirational. They divided the whole process of starting a business into a step-by-step process and I have taken many of their ideas on board

when starting my own journey.

“Thanks to Birkbeck I was introduced to a mentor – a finance manager at PWC. She helped me set out clear goals for getting my business off the ground and helped me with my first pitch to venture capital investors – she helped me prepare for the presentation and offered superb advice on getting the financial aspects just right.”

## Aiming higher

This year, Birkbeck’s Business Engagement team also had a finalist in the Santander Universities Entrepreneurship Awards for the first time. Fiona Button was chosen on the strength of her business plan and made it to the final shortlist of ten, out of entries submitted by more than a hundred other institutions. Through a networking event held on campus, she met a fellow student who is a software developer, and together they are developing a prototype app.

Fiona is now based in Kensington Creates, a business incubator attached to the Kensington Aldridge Academy, which specialises in enterprise. “Starting this business brings together everything I’ve ever done – teaching, neuroscience, design and literacy,” she said. “So this feels like a completely natural journey for me.”

More information about Fiona’s business can be found at [buttonlearning.com](http://buttonlearning.com) and about Tomasz’s at [getafreequotation.co.uk](http://getafreequotation.co.uk). For more information on the Enterprise Pathways programme at Birkbeck or to see how you could get involved, contact Gary Brannan on [g.brannan@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:g.brannan@bbk.ac.uk) or 020 7631 6684.

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The College has developed Enterprise Pathways, a programme of comprehensive support for aspiring entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey.



# New teaching lab for Earth and Planetary Sciences

## Petrology lab with mineralogical microprobe leads the sector

Birkbeck's Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences has increased its footprint in the College's main Malet Street building with the addition of a new petrology laboratory, the first such lab in the UK.

Equipped with a one-of-a-kind mix of scientific and teaching apparatus for up to 67 students, the lab also has a mineralogical microprobe – a first for a UK teaching institution – which will enable teaching staff to carry out elemental analyses of different geological samples in near-real time.

Each of the student stations is also equipped with its own microscope and touchscreen computer to complement the main teaching equipment, which for the first time will also include an electron microscope housed next to the lab – moved from its previous location on the campus of Birkbeck's neighbour, UCL.

"The setup of the new lab will enable our lecturers to analyse geological samples and demonstrate their different mineralogical characteristics to students while they examine their own samples under a microscope," said Professor Gerald Roberts, Head of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Birkbeck. "I know of no other teaching facility like it."

The new lab was completed in autumn 2015 thanks to £1.3m in funding, half of which was provided through a grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, with the rest being matched by the College.

The teaching with the new facilities will also be complemented for distance learners by Panopto, the College's lecture capture technology, which the Department has adapted to provide higher-resolution video, enabling students on the Department's popular



Left: The new £1.3m lab in Birkbeck's Malet Street building (Professor Gerald Roberts)

distance learning courses to benefit from the new technology through video and audio. "The videos are archived for internet streaming at a later date for distance learners or revision, and we are developing the capacity to stream lectures live. This all helps with recruitment and retention, and enhances the student experience," explained Professor Roberts.

Birkbeck is the only provider of a distance learning BSc Geology in the world which is also accredited by the

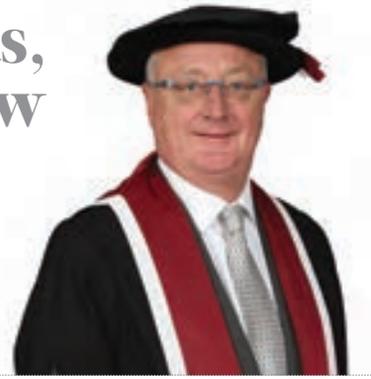
British Geological Society. The College is also one of the oldest providers of a geology education in London, having offered this education continuously since 1840.

"Ensuring we can integrate face-to-face teaching with an equivalent provision for distance learners was a vital part of the project from the beginning," added Professor Roberts. "Many of our students already work in a field related to geology – for example, mining or oil and gas – and travel regularly or are based in

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Birkbeck is the only provider in the world of a distance learning BSc Geology degree which is also accredited by the British Geological Society.

## Sir Eric Thomas, Birkbeck Fellow



Author of Universities UK report on part-time study shares his thoughts on supporting flexible learning

A former president of Universities UK (2011–2013), Sir Eric Thomas conducted a wide-ranging review into the state of part-time education nationwide.

In 2013, Sir Eric was appointed the Government's UK International Education Champion and he co-chairs the new International Education Council alongside the Universities and Science Minister. Sir Eric spoke to *BBK* about what it means to him to have become a Birkbeck Fellow in November 2015 (see p43) and his views on how best to support part-time learning.

### What does it mean to you to be made a Fellow of Birkbeck?

I am very, very honoured. Birkbeck is such an important institution for those who can only access education part-time or are non-traditional learners.

### What inspired you into academia?

If I could trace it to one moment, it was reading *The Glass Bead Game* by German author Hermann Hesse in my teens.

The novel is set in the future in a fictional country where the ultimate achievement is to become a Master of the 'Glass Bead Game', which is portrayed as a hugely intellectually challenging and abstract game. Through it, the novel asks questions about the place of pure intellectual pursuit in society and, conversely, what is the duty of academia to tackle real-world challenges, and it piqued my interest in learning and the place of universities in contributing to society.

I then went off to study medicine and once I had qualified, I had a stint as a research fellow at the University of Sheffield, where I had the realisation that combining clinical work and research was a perfect fit for me.

### Thinking about what you say about universities transforming people and

### places, how do you see Birkbeck's role in London?

London is the world's premier university city, no question. We have so many world-class institutions here; and of those, Birkbeck is one of a kind, enabling anyone from across the city to access education of that calibre through evening study, at any age and to recast their lives. Where Birkbeck leads is in an institutional recognition that people are ready for university study at different stages of their lives. Some are ready at eighteen, some later; my wife, for example, went back to university to study history in her forties.

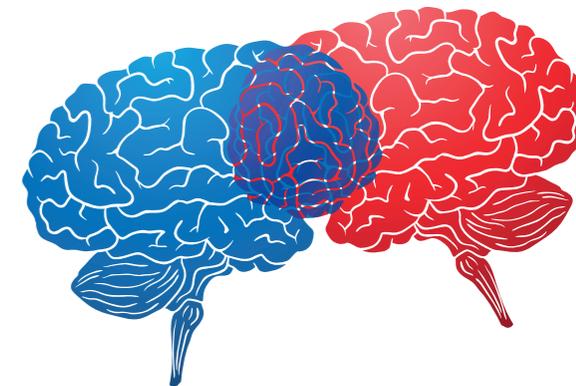
### We have seen the number of students who are studying part-time decline in the past few years. What implications does this have, in your view?

It has huge implications. We know that in the twenty-first century, our workforce will need to reskill throughout their lives to adapt to a changing economy. For many people who are midway through their career, part-time, evening education is their only option to upskill or reskill while working. So with a decline in part-time learning, what we're really seeing is a decrease in the upskilling of the workforce, which is worrying. The decline needs to be addressed, if we're to remain a competitive economy.

### What measures do you think could address this?

We need to involve employers as well as government as, after all, they will be the ones who benefit from a workforce which is upgrading its skills. An approach which integrates a degree of sponsorship would be one way to approach the provision of part-time study in a way which is balanced and beneficial to all concerned. Part-time learning has already changed so many people's lives and it has the potential to change so many more.

# Awards & recognitions

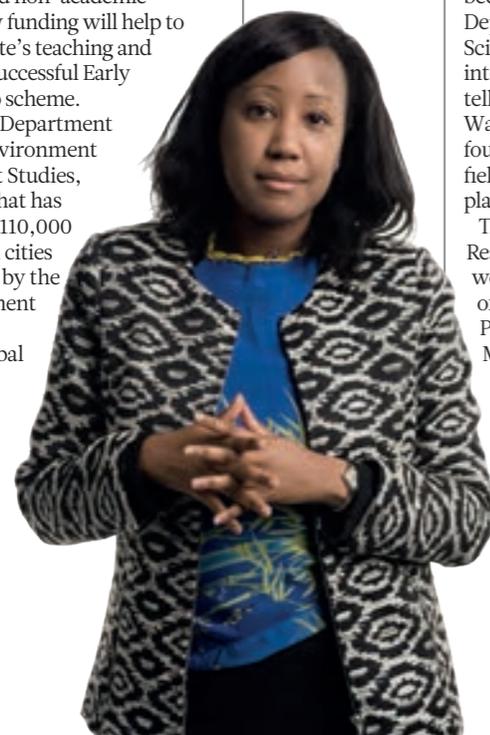


The contribution and impact of Birkbeck academics have been recognised by major grants and by national and international academic institutions

## Awards

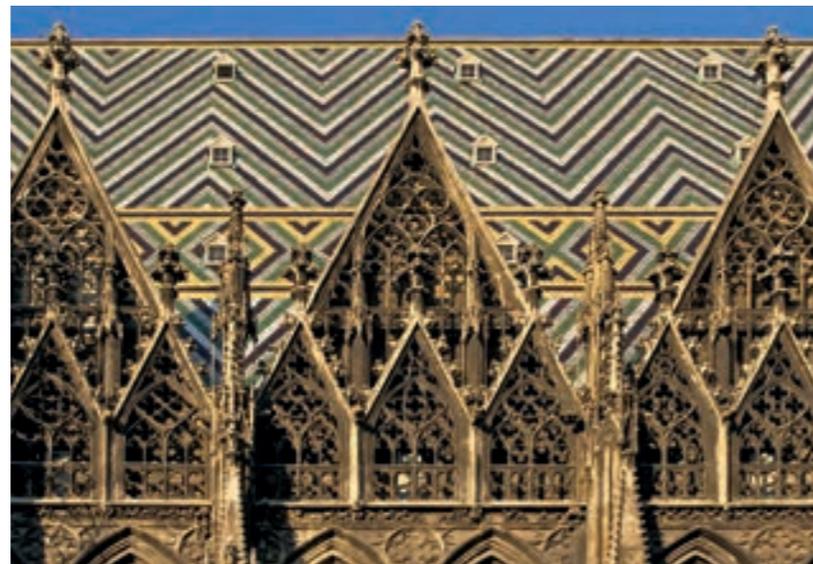
The Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism, based at Birkbeck, has been awarded £1.4m by the Pears Foundation to support its world-leading research and to continue its growth. The funding represents an ongoing commitment from the Foundation to support the work of the Institute, following its initial donation of £1.5m in 2010 to set up the Institute at Birkbeck and relocate the Wiener Library to the Birkbeck campus. In its first five years the Pears Institute has gained an international reputation for its innovative approach to the study of antisemitism and to exploring its connections with other forms of racism and intolerance. It has also become an important bridge between academic research and public policy, taking an inclusive approach to working with academic and non-academic partners. The new funding will help to extend the Institute's teaching and will continue its successful Early Career Fellowship scheme.

Dr Diane Horn, Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies, is part of a team that has been awarded a £110,000 research grant on cities and sea-level rise by the Natural Environment Research Council and the Arup Global



Below:

Dr Caroline Kamau  
Right: St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, a city that was part of Dr Zoe Opacic's work (Wikimedia Commons)



Research Challenge. The research will bring together current work on flood risk to help advise cities such as Hull and Bristol in the UK, and Norfolk in Virginia, USA, which are all threatened by rising sea levels.

A Leverhulme Trust research grant has been awarded to Professor Ian Crawford, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and colleagues to fund research into what the Moon's geology may tell us about the history of the Milky Way Galaxy, potentially laying the foundations for a major new scientific field at the boundary of astronomy and planetary science.

The Leverhulme Trust also awarded Research Fellowships to support work by five academics in the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy: Dr Sue Brooks and Dr Kate Maclean, Department of Geography,

Environment and Development Studies; Professor Catharine Edwards and Dr Sarah Howard in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology; and Professor Sasha Roseneil in the Department of Psychosocial Studies. Dr Zoe Opacic, Department of the History of Art, also received a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship for her work on architecture and spectacle in the late medieval city.

Dr Becky Briant, Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies, has been awarded a facilities grant by the Natural Environment Research Council to enable her and a team of collaborators to trial techniques that would enable accurate radiocarbon dating of macrofossil seeds from 25,000 to 50,000 years ago – the period when Neanderthals were being replaced by modern humans within

Europe. Accurately dating seeds from this age will add to archaeologists' understanding of the environmental background in which modern humans were developing.

## Recognitions

Marina Warner CBE, Professor of English and Creative Writing and panel chair of the 2015 Man Booker International Prize, was made a Dame in the 2015 New Year Honours list for services to higher education and literary scholarship. Later in the year, Professor Warner was also awarded the 2015 Holberg Prize, one of the world's most prestigious scholarly prizes. The award is presented annually to scholars who have made outstanding contributions to research in the arts and humanities, social science, law or theology. Professor Warner received the award for her work on the analysis of stories and myths and how they reflect their time and place.

Fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences has been conferred on Professor Stephen Frosh and Professor Sasha Roseneil, both Department of Psychosocial Studies. Professor Frosh was recognised for his pioneering work in the field of psychosocial studies, working across disciplines including sociology, gender studies, race and ethnicity studies, psychology and psychotherapy. Professor Roseneil was recognised for her widely influential work on gender and sexuality and the sociologies of social movements.

Fellowships were also conferred on Professor Helen Saibil, Department of Biological Sciences, by the British Biophysical Society and the Royal Microscopical Society, and on Dr Caroline Kamau, Department of Organizational Psychology, who has been admitted as a



Left: Dr Diane Horn  
Above: Brain interaction is the subject of Dr Iroise Dumontheil's investigation (iStockphoto)  
Below: University Square Stratford, winner of the Concrete Society Award

Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine for her research into occupational preparedness in medicine.

The prestigious Spearman Medal, the oldest award of the British Psychological Society, has been awarded to Dr Iroise Dumontheil, Department of Psychological Sciences, in recognition of her investigation into a region of the brain associated with how we interact with other people, and the thought processes which allow us to control our attention, and plan and achieve our goals.

Major academic awards have also gone to Professor Jean-Marc Dewaele, Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication, and Dr Anthony Roberts, Department of Biological Sciences. Professor Dewaele has received the biannual Robert C Gardner Award for Outstanding

Research in Bilingualism from the International Association of Language and Social Psychology. Dr Roberts has been recognised for his work into the structure of motor proteins with an award from the Biochemical Society for outstanding early career scientists. He will give the Early Career Research Award lecture at a 2016 Biochemical Society conference, where he will be presented with the award's medal.

Professor Jerry White's book *Zeppelin Nights: London in the First World War* has been named the Spear's Social History Book of the year for 2014, while the Japanese Association of Sociological Criminology has awarded the Young Criminologist 2014 prize to Dr Mai Sato, Institute for Criminal Policy Research, for her book *The Death Penalty in Japan: Will the Public Tolerate Abolition?*

The innovative use of concrete at University Square Stratford – Birkbeck's £33m state-of-the-art campus in Stratford, a collaboration with the University of East London – has won a major award from the Concrete Society. Designed by international architectural practice Make and built by contractor VolkerFitzpatrick in association with AWW architects, the five-storey building scooped the Concrete Society Award in the University Buildings category and won praise for its 'clean and crisp' lines.



# Towards our third century

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**We want to hear your ideas for how we can mark 2023.**



In 2023, Birkbeck will reach a very special milestone: our 200th anniversary. Professor David Latchman CBE, Master of Birkbeck, calls for your ideas

Perhaps the most striking reflection about nearing our bicentennial is how little the core mission of our institution has changed – and for good reason. The people, technology and the capital city itself have changed beyond recognition across these past two centuries. But George Birkbeck’s mission of providing evening university education for all remains our mission today, because it remains absolutely vital.

Breaking down the barriers to education is fundamental to academia, society and the economy at large. But above all, it is critical to the thousands of extraordinary individuals who change their lives for the better every year with evening study here at Birkbeck. The constancy of our commitment to London and its people is unique and worth celebrating. We are very proud to be a research-intensive university like no other.

Remarkable things have happened at Birkbeck, since 2,000 people rallied at the Crown and Anchor pub on London’s Strand in 1823 to launch the Mechanics’ Institution (as we were called then). Today’s students follow in the footsteps of some of the country’s most celebrated radical thinkers and social reformers, including four Nobel Laureates (Derek Barton, Patrick Blackett, TS Eliot, Aaron Klug) and a British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. Biophysicist Rosalind Franklin advanced her ground-breaking work on DNA and virology at Birkbeck, literary great TS Eliot taught English, and pioneering suffragist Dame Millicent Fawcett lectured on the problems of poverty here.

Clockwise from right: Birkbeck’s original Mechanics’ Institution building, just off Chancery Lane; in 1884, the College moved to Brems Buildings in Fetter Lane where, later, classes continued in the street after a bomb hit the building during the Blitz; centenary celebrations take place in 1923; a bust of founder George Birkbeck (all Birkbeck Archive)



Above, right: The ‘Bernal Picasso’ – the only mural drawn by Picasso in the UK (© Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2015)  
 Below: The Birkbeck Institution Magazine, an early predecessor to BBK, published in 1892 (Birkbeck Archive)  
 Further below: Construction begins on the College’s current home in Malet Street, in the shadow of Senate House. The building opened in 1952 (Birkbeck Archive)



During the Great War, Birkbeck provided free education to Belgian refugees; today we are finding ways to help this century’s refugees. One of the first computers in the UK was developed at Birkbeck by Andrew Booth and today that expertise continues, with the department now using its expertise in Big Data analytics to examine how to maximise the effectiveness of precisely tailoring treatment for Parkinson’s disease patients. Crystallographer and peace activist JD Bernal established our pioneering Biomolecular Research Laboratory, where today electron microscopy is progressing our understanding of diseases ranging from cancer to malaria. One visitor drew a mural in Bernal’s flat above the lab – it’s the only mural drawn by Pablo Picasso in the UK (see above).

Remarkable things continue to happen here. The Birkbeck Babylab is a world-leading centre for the study of the brain function of babies with conditions such as autism and ADHD. In 2015, Martin Paul Eve and Caroline Edwards launched the Open Library of Humanities, which seeks to make scholarly publishing fairer, more accessible and rigorously preserved for the digital future (see p28). The Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism at Birkbeck is one of just two centres in Europe whose mission is to promote understanding of antisemitism.



This appetite for excellence is passed on to our accomplished alumni, who can be found in all spheres of twenty-first-century life – from business and government to sport, media and the arts. The histories of London and of Birkbeck are inextricably linked. For example, our School of Arts students are taught in rooms where Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell once lived; and during World War II, Birkbeck was the only university to stay open during the Blitz and, despite a direct hit, every term was completed in full.

**We want to hear from you**  
 We want to continue to make a positive impact on London, its people and the wider world, by entering our third century bursting with energy, creativity and innovation. Although our bicentennial year is some time away, we believe the journey towards our third century begins now. And that is where you come in.

We are reaching out to you, our friends and supporters, to ask how you would like to see our 200th birthday celebrated. We do want to look back over our rich 200-year history, but we also want to look forward to the next 200 years. How can we do this in a way that would be recognisable to George Birkbeck, if he were alive today? We want to hear your ideas for how we can mark 2023.

What would make a fitting event, legacy or celebration? How might we harness the power of the digital age to illuminate our research? How can our former students contribute to, and help shape, our future? How can we share the many stories of transformation in which Birkbeck has played a part?

We would love to hear your thoughts. Please visit [bbk.ac.uk/200ideas](http://bbk.ac.uk/200ideas), email us your ideas to [birkbeck200@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:birkbeck200@bbk.ac.uk) or write to us at Birkbeck’s 200th Anniversary, External Relations, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX. Your ideas will help us to find the brightest, most rewarding ways to enter a new era for Birkbeck, still grounded in George Birkbeck’s rallying cry: ‘Now is the time for the universal benefits of the blessings of knowledge’.

# Our year in events



Highlights of Birkbeck's public lectures, events and conferences – from the history of race relations law in the UK to the serious business of baby laughter

## Reimagining the future of higher education

Head teachers, students, higher education advisers and corporate partners were welcomed to a special event at the ArcelorMittal Orbit at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford early in 2015 to introduce them to Birkbeck's unique model of evening learning.

Eddie Playfair, Principal of NewVic, one of London's largest sixth form colleges, said at the event: "I have no doubt that the three-year full-time degree evening programme is an incredibly attractive option. Birkbeck is creating knowledge, stimulating ideas, promoting understanding between people and is helping propel people into an exciting future."

Find out more about the event at: [bbk.ac.uk/news/birkbeck-helping-school-leavers-to-re-imagine-3-year-degree](http://bbk.ac.uk/news/birkbeck-helping-school-leavers-to-re-imagine-3-year-degree)

## Arts Week

From a discussion with the team behind Mike Leigh's acclaimed film *Mr Turner* to a symposium on the life and legacy of Spanish philosopher Maria Zambrano, Birkbeck's Arts Week 2015 was a brilliant celebration of the arts, encompassing talks, performances, exhibitions and screenings.

Leading on the eighteenth century but extending far beyond, the packed programme of more than 40 events included: a demonstration of the wonders of the magic lantern by historian and showman Mervyn Heard;

**Above:** Science Week looked at baby laughter (iStockphoto)  
**Below:** Timothy Spall and Mike Leigh on the set of *Mr Turner*



an exploration of the twenty-first-century novel by Booker Prize nominated author Deborah Levy; and a quartet of contemporary films from Brazil and Colombia.

A panel of Birkbeck academics explored the politics, gender dynamics and social unrest of the eighteenth century, delving into the Enlightenment's disgusting diets and beverages of choice to show how food and drink could lead to full-scale mutiny.

The twenty-fifth birthday of the Vasari Research Centre in the School of Arts was celebrated during Arts Week. Its pioneering work in digital art history was recognised with an exhibition and a symposium including a lecture by the Director of the Centre, Emeritus Professor Will Vaughan.

Podcasts and blogs capturing highlights of Arts Week can be accessed at: [bbk.ac.uk/arts/about-us/events/arts-week/](http://bbk.ac.uk/arts/about-us/events/arts-week/) and at: [https://storify.com/birkbeck\\_arts/arts-week-2015](https://storify.com/birkbeck_arts/arts-week-2015)

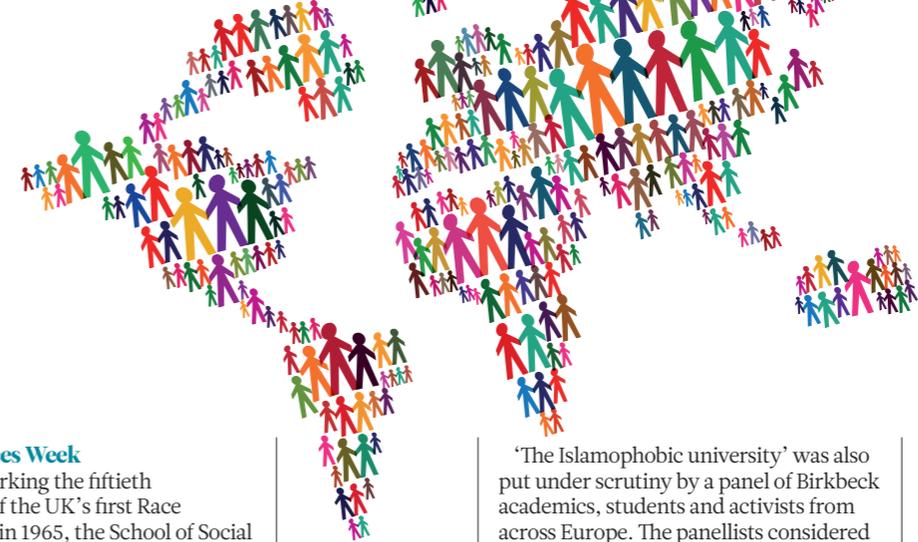
## Science Week

The talks, film screening and lab tours of this year's Science Week highlighted the broad range and high quality of work being done within the School of Science.

Women in Science Day was marked with talks by Professor Helen Saibil on 'Protein Machines in the arms race between man and pathogen' and by Professor Karen Hudson-Edwards on 'Water: precious, polluted, protected'.

Baby laughter, the development of human curiosity, and an analysis of what babies can tell us about dementia were the focus of three talks by academics from Birkbeck's Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, while earlier in the week Professor Martin Eimer spoke on 'How the brain recognises faces' and Dr Alan Lowe gave a talk on 'Visualising the inner workings of the living cell'.

Many of the events were captured in photos, blogs and videos, which can be accessed at: [bbk.ac.uk/science/about-us/events/science-week](http://bbk.ac.uk/science/about-us/events/science-week)



## Social Sciences Week

With 2015 marking the fiftieth anniversary of the UK's first Race Relations Act in 1965, the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy's annual week of public events focused on the themes of race and diaspora.

The week began with a showing of *The Stuart Hall Project*, a documentary about Jamaican Stuart Hall, who immigrated to the UK in the 1950s to take up a place at the University of Oxford and who became a founding figure of cultural studies.

In collaboration with the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, the Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism hosted an evening of talks by three scholars working in this field who reflected on the history of race relations law in Britain and offered their perspectives on what has been achieved, and what still needs to be done.

A podcast of the event and other highlights of the week can be accessed at: [bbk.ac.uk/sshp/about-us/events/social-sciences-week/2015](http://bbk.ac.uk/sshp/about-us/events/social-sciences-week/2015)

## Law on trial

The School of Law's annual week-long programme of public lectures, panel discussions and workshops put the 'University on Trial' in June.

Staff at the School – recognised internationally as authorities in their field – discuss a different legal theme each year, and in 2015 fittingly chose to examine the Magna Charta Universitatum, a document which celebrates university traditions and encourages bonds among European universities. Discussions focused on how the Charta's principles are simultaneously challenged and upheld by law.

Highlights of the week included Professor Adam Gearey's inaugural lecture 'Lives that slide out of view', which considered accounts of those living among and acting for 'the poor', from Jack London to George Orwell and the poverty lawyers of the 1960s and 1970s, and questioned what these accounts tell us about the unwillingness of jurisprudence to deal with social degradation.

'The Islamophobic university' was also put under scrutiny by a panel of Birkbeck academics, students and activists from across Europe. The panellists considered the #JeSuisCharlie response to the attack on French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* as well as the implications of the UK Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on universities to prevent radicalism by monitoring student activity.

A podcast of Professor Gearey's lecture can be accessed at: [bbk.ac.uk/law/about-us/events/law-on-trial-2015](http://bbk.ac.uk/law/about-us/events/law-on-trial-2015)

## Memorial lectures

Memorial lectures given within the School of Business, Economics and Informatics this year included:

- Professor Dame Wendy Hall on the importance of web science and the role of the web in knowledge creation and sharing
- Lord Currie of Marylebone, who offered an analysis of the current competition policy framework following the 2015 UK general election
- Professor Lynda Gratton, founder of the Hot Spots Movement, on 'How our world will change – and what it means for us'
- Professor Joanna Bourke in

conversation with Lord Bilimoria of Chelsea CBE, DL on the role of higher education institutions in developing enterprising students.

Films of the lecture by Dame Wendy Hall and the conversation with Lord Bilimoria can be viewed at: [bbk.ac.uk/business/about-us/film-unit/lectures](http://bbk.ac.uk/business/about-us/film-unit/lectures)

## Fiftieth anniversary celebration for Applied Linguistics

Since its inception in 1965 as the first Applied Linguistics department in England – and only the second in the UK – Birkbeck's Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication has made a significant and influential contribution to the field.

The Department celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with events throughout the year, culminating in a landmark celebratory conference in June that showcased its research work. Bringing together current and former students and staff, including the founder of the department, Professor Michel Blanc, as well as members of major national and international Applied Linguistics associations, the conference debated the future of Applied Linguistics and its position in solving real-world problems related to language.

**Above:** Social Sciences Week looked at the issues of global race and diaspora (iStockphoto)  
**Right:** A young girl holds a 'Je suis Charlie' sign in Place du Luxembourg, Brussels (Wikimedia Commons/Valentina Media)



# Ali Smith explains 'How to be both'

Award-winning author Ali Smith visits Birkbeck to discuss her Man Booker nominated novel

In a lively, humorous exchange, Birkbeck's Professor of Creative Writing Russell Celyn Jones and novelist Ali Smith discussed her Booker Prize nominated novel, *How to be Both*, in the fifth Man Booker event at Birkbeck.

As David Latchman, the Master of Birkbeck, observed in his opening remarks, the Booker Prize Foundation and Birkbeck both share an ongoing, deep commitment to broadening knowledge, bringing the best of contemporary fiction to the widest possible audience, and belying cramped, utilitarian approaches to education.

Smith described her dazzling, rambunctious novel as two self-contained but intertwined stories: one follows the travails of Italian Renaissance fresco painter, Francesco del Cossa, a real-life artist who painted a series of elaborate allegorical frescos in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, northern Italy; the other story tells of George, a bereaved twenty-first-century teenager who is remembering a family trip to Italy to view del Cossa's frescos in the 'Palace of Not Being Bored'.

With its focus on Renaissance art, and painting in particular, the novel is itself a diptych – or 'dipstick', as Smith drolly punned to the audience – presenting two separate but intersecting stories in dialogue with one another. The diptych – which literally means 'twofold' in ancient Greek – is, Smith explained, book-like in its construction, with hinges that enable it to be closed and transported, making it an appealingly 'swivel-able form'.

In the UK, the book was published in dual form, with half of the copies opening with the del Cossa narrative and the other half opening with the story of George. Smith recounted with delight how the

printers hired 'muddlers' to randomise the packing of the books and ensure that shops carried both versions of the novel. For Smith, it is important that readers can 'upend' the novel and 'it still works'.

The complex twisting and interleaving of the two stories typifies the ways in which history, memory, feeling, gender and sexuality elude and shrug off human categorisation. George is a boyish young woman with a man's name who falls in love with another woman, whereas del Cossa is a woman who uses concealment and disguise to reinvent herself as a male artist. The del Cossa narrative opens poetically and strangely with the forcible resurrection of the long-dead del Cossa, who finds herself standing in the National Gallery in London, observing George – whom she mistakes for a boy – scrutinising del Cossa's stern portrait of St Vincent Ferrer, a Dominican friar and missionary. The painting is real and is indeed hanging in the National Gallery.

Interestingly, Smith confessed that George's gender identity was indeterminate when she started working on the novel; it was only later that George became female. Indeed, Smith described the fictional creation of character as a mode of channelling, in which characters arrive fully formed and the task of the novelist is to give them the necessary attention and time to allow their voices to come through. The voice of del Cossa was the first that Smith heard, forcing her to discard 90 pages of the novel she had written and leaving her only seven months in which to complete and submit the manuscript. George's voice and syntax came, fully formed, about half-way through this rewrite.

*How To Be Both* is concerned with history and memory, with what is

remembered and how – and what is lost. As Smith observed, humans need to live in three dimensions, to feel connected to the past and the future simultaneously. Del Cossa's frescos were plastered over and the room used as a tobacco store until, Smith explained, the plaster flaked off in the 1840s and the frescos were rediscovered.

Thus, in the novel, George is anxious that all that is forgotten is lost, making history little more than a horrifying charnel house. Her mother, though, has a more mystical understanding, insisting that that which has existed does not simply cease because we can no longer see, experience or remember it. Smith also spoke of novelists' frustration with the form, as it cannot escape the temporal sequence of action and consequence and is incapable of simultaneously representing the simultaneous occurrences of everyday life. To know George's future, the reader

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This lively exchange further confirmed and extended the success of this rewarding partnership between Birkbeck and the Booker Foundation.

must journey back into the life of del Cossa, although, if you encounter the del Cossa section first, you will know (but not necessarily fully understand) George's future before you know her past. Like last year's Man Booker at Birkbeck speaker, Hilary Mantel, Smith has written a historical novel of sorts, although Smith's is formally inventive and playfully cuts across genres.

Although Smith attentively and gamely engaged with the various readings of her novel proffered by the audience, what lingered was her ultimate reassertion of the work's capaciousness and playfulness of spirit.

This was the fifth Man Booker event at Birkbeck – previous speakers include Sarah Waters, Kazuo Ishiguro, Alan Hollinghurst and Hilary Mantel – and this lively exchange further confirmed and extended the success of this rewarding partnership between Birkbeck and the Booker Foundation.

Left: Ali Smith (Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert/Getty Images)  
Below: The Man Booker at Birkbeck event took place at Friends' House, London, in November 2015





# The passage to English

Dame Marina Warner, Professor of English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck, has spent the last two years reading novels from all over the world as Chair of the 2015 Man Booker International Prize

When I was first asked to chair the Man Booker International Prize 2015 a friend asked me was I interested in canon formation? He was sceptical of the whole enterprise. I was too, but it turned out that I am interested in it, and so were my fellow judges: not in establishing a literary canon as such but in realigning the map.

Given the extraordinarily varied and compelling writers whom we read and nominated, the judging process raised some issues about fiction in translation and the idea of world literature, particularly in an era when English is master when it comes to use as a world language.

What can translation achieve that is valuable in itself? The answers to this bear on the uses of fiction, and on the reasons that writers are choosing the novel as their form of expression.

The MBI prize, unlike others, compares works in English with works

in translation, and though at first this seems a bit awkward and unequal and ill-assorted, I have come to think it's a fruitful and important way of approaching literature, as it does not quarantine foreign fiction.

When Goethe coined the term *Weltliteratur*, world literature, he was aware how much he had read and was reading in translation: Dante, Shakespeare, the Upanishads, Persian poetry, the Arabian Nights, and he wanted to respond to his own literary legacy, and add to it in the light of other literatures he could only read fluently by means of translators. But Goethe – and other advocates of world literature such as Jorge Luis Borges – relished a variety of translations to compare and contrast; the more versions exist, the more familiar readers become with them, the more translators can express themselves.

Besides faithful renderings, which

Dryden termed 'metaphrase', Dryden distinguished two more states: 'translation with latitude', which he rather confusingly called 'paraphrase', and another, 'the third way', he wrote, which he called:

*"imitation, where the translator (if he has not now lost that name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the ground-work as he pleases ..."*

This practice may sound like a travesty or betrayal of the original, but its current growing popularity among writers who do not know the original language but are making works out of other works has helped [lift] some of the snobbery that blighted translated work. The roster is impressive: Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf*, and other translations, Ted Hughes's *Tales from Ovid*, Frank McGuinness' many versions of Greek plays, Anne Carson's various *Antigones* and her novel in verse, *Autobiography of Red*, Simon Armitage, Lavinia Greenlaw... Everyone is turning to forerunners to quarry them for inspiration.

Hard-working professionals can feel understandably miffed at all these eager writers with no Latin and less Greek – or indeed any other language – diletantishly fancying themselves as translators, and wildly departing from – disrespecting? – the original. I sympathise with their impatience. However the renewed respectability of imitation, as practiced by Heaney and Hughes and Carson, has very much fostered confidence in translation as literature in itself, no longer lesser than the original. Certainly writers are themselves more and more ready to take up an existing work and revision it, disregarding heroic notions of originality and extending acts of translation into acts of creation.

Taken from 'Translucination or travesty?: The passage into English', the William Matthews Memorial Lecture delivered by Professor Dame Marina Warner in June 2015

Above: Marina Warner (Edward Park)

# Chair of Governors



Harvey McGrath

**T**he policy environment for higher education continues to change, with many uncertainties as we look forward. However, our prudent financial management together with the success of our efforts to expand our three-year full-time evening undergraduate programmes have resulted in both a strong financial position and the largest cohort ever graduating from Birkbeck this year.

## College finances

The College's total income was £106,104,000, an increase of 4.6% from last year, thanks to the continued health of student recruitment at all levels. A focus on strong financial management has resulted in a surplus of over 6.5% of turnover for the fifth year running, resulting in cash plus current investments of over £41m, providing Birkbeck with a solid financial basis for future planning and investment.

## Development and alumni

We continue to develop our programme of encouraging our close-knit alumni community to support the College both financially and in kind, developing our mentoring programmes for current students and the breadth of financial support for students at all levels. The generosity of our former students, our friends and our corporate partners manifests itself in a multitude of ways. With over £5m donated to support our students, our research and our buildings in 2014-2015, philanthropic support continues to help us achieve

our ambitions. Gifts ranged from £2 to £1.4million and we remain grateful to each and every supporter. Of particular note was our student telephone campaign, in which 46% of alumni contacted made a donation.

We have continued to develop a range of corporate partnerships, including successful collaborations with Ede and Ravenscroft, Winton Capital and Santander. Of particular note is the development of a Work Readiness Programme, funded by the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, which ensures that our students are prepared for careers in sectors such as digital technology, health and social care.

Our alumni are providing increasing levels of in-kind support with 266 volunteers donating 1,242 hours of time to programmes which support student recruitment, employability and welfare.

Our flagship mentoring programme, which includes alumni and corporate volunteers, is now available to all students across the College.

## Green agenda

Birkbeck continues to implement its carbon management plan, while identifying further opportunities for carbon reduction – thereby stretching our reduction target from 10% to 16% so far. A key element of our sustainability efforts is empowering staff through our network of environmental representatives to help improve performance and embed a sustainability culture across the College. Intensifying these efforts will increase Birkbeck's

chances of achieving accreditation to the ISO14001 Environmental Management Standards in the near future.

## Outlook

The coming year will be one of ongoing change and adaptation as the new Government's reforms to higher education in England unfold. In the context of such a broad sweep of change, the College will continue to maintain a flexible and robust position to support its role as a leading research-intensive provider of high-quality evening education.

Looking further forward, we have begun planning for the celebration of Birkbeck's 200th anniversary in 2023 (see p14-15). Philanthropy has played a key role in the delivery of our mission from the foundation of the College, and this anniversary provides a special opportunity to reinforce that tradition. So we will continue to develop new forms of corporate partnership and other donors to help deliver Birkbeck's unique combination of flexible part-time provision supported by research excellence into the third century of the College's life.

Overall, our strong financial position, effective management and adaptability to the changing external environment, together with the support and engagement of our alumni, corporate partners and other donors, give me confidence that we will continue to successfully navigate through the current challenging times and deliver on George Birkbeck's original vision.



**The coming year will be one of ongoing change and adaptation as the new Government's reforms to higher education in England unfold.**

# Birkbeck celebrates research success



Professor Julian Swann, Pro-Vice-Master for Research at Birkbeck, explains how the College is well placed to maintain its research strength in the years ahead

With the constant brooding presence of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the latest of which took place in 2014, research can sometimes appear as a rather dry and often intimidating process of league tables and grade point averages.

Nothing could be more misleading, and REF, whatever its importance in terms of institutional income and esteem, can never be more than a snapshot of the much wider world of academic research that is central to the lives of individuals, departments and schools and which informs teaching at every level in the College.

All five of Birkbeck's schools are multi-disciplinary and they all contribute to collaborative projects with universities elsewhere in the UK and internationally.

In addition, the College hosts over 40 research institutes and centres, including

the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, the Centre for Iberian and Latin American Visual Studies and the Centre for Innovation Management Research, as well as others – such as the Centre for Neuroimaging or the Centre for Planetary Sciences – that are joint ventures with UCL.

What all of these groups have in common is a mission to bring Birkbeck academics together from across disciplines and schools to exchange ideas, present their work and engage in scholarly debate. Not surprisingly, Birkbeck's research is constantly being drawn upon to inform the public, policy-makers and institutions influencing politics, culture and intellectual life: from the almost ubiquitous voice of a Birkbeck expert on Radio 4 or in the national press, to the often less visible – but no less important – contacts with museums, NGOs, pressure groups and charities.

In addition, Birkbeck holds a vibrant programme of workshops and conferences, and hosts public lectures, seminars, exhibitions and films. Over the last 12 months, Birkbeck's Institute for the Humanities and the Institute for Social Research alone held events

ranging from examining London's housing crisis, to memory and the First World War, as well as lectures by Carlo Ginzberg, Slavoj Žižek, Kathleen C Stewart and Jacqueline Rose.

A vibrant research culture has to be sustainable: Birkbeck is fully committed to training and development of the next generation of researchers. National higher education policy is increasingly focused on establishing what are termed Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) or, alternatively, centres with funding concentrated in the hands of university consortia offering jointly administered training, supervision and resources.

Birkbeck is a member of a number of these consortia including, for example, the Medical Research Council DTP with UCL and the London Natural Environment Research Council partnership which – in addition to other University of London colleges – includes the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and the Institute of Zoology.

As these examples illustrate, the College enjoys a wide range of partnerships with leading UK universities and it is taking an active part in preparing the researchers of the future. As I write, it is still far from certain what form any future REF will take; likewise predicting developments in the funding landscape, the composition of the research councils and much else besides would require a very large crystal ball. Whatever the outcome of these and other twists and turns in higher education policy, Birkbeck is well placed to meet the challenge.



# Predicting the future

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We've found that there is a significant link between the way in which newborn babies look at images and their later temperament and behaviour.

Birkbeck researchers are pioneering new methods of analysing psychological development

In the medical professions, forewarned is forearmed. With this in mind, research activity taking place in Birkbeck's Department of Psychological Sciences has been seeking out robust new ways to predict behavioural outcomes earlier than has previously been possible. These findings have implications for childhood conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

## Predicting behavioural problems

At Birkbeck's Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development (CBCD), the looking patterns of newborn babies have been found to predict behaviour in later childhood.

Published in June, the research was carried out by Birkbeck and the University of Padua in Italy. It involved studying the visual attention of Italian newborns, and then following up the same children when they were between five and nine years old. The researchers

showed that newborns who typically spent longer orienting to each image showed fewer behavioural problems later on in childhood.

Senior author Dr Angelica Ronald, of the CBCD, said: "We've found that there is a significant link between the way in which newborn babies look at images and their later temperament and behaviour.

"Because the babies were only just born, the differences we observed in visual attention between them must be due to genetic predisposition or influences from the prenatal environment.

"We hope that our findings will inspire further work to explore how to identify babies at risk of attentional difficulties. At the moment, conditions that include attentional problems like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are usually not picked up until middle childhood."

Below:  
(Wired magazine)

## Predicting autism symptoms

Elsewhere in the CBCD, a separate research project has explored a potential new method for predicting the development of autism symptoms.

Carried out by Birkbeck's Babylab – part of the CBCD – and the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's College London, the study involved using eye-tracking technology to ask whether superior perception, often reported in older children and adults with autism, is already present in infants who are at risk of developing autism symptoms because they have an older sibling with the disorder.

The results showed that those infants with enhanced visual searching ability at nine months old also manifested more severe autism symptoms at 15 months and at two years. The findings suggest that the unusual perceptual ability of those infants is intrinsically linked to the emerging autism symptoms.

The researchers behind the study said the findings may shift the way autism is studied, with the majority of previous work having focused on social interaction and communication impairments as predictors of autism.

"Evidence is now accumulating for early differences in motor and perceptual abilities, which calls for a reassessment of developmental theories of autism," said Dr Teodora Gliga of Birkbeck's Babylab, and a principal author of the research. "We hope this study and others will bring autism research questions closer to the needs of those directly affected."



# New professors

Two members of Birkbeck staff were promoted to the post of Professor in 2014–2015



## **Matt Cook**

### **Professor of History**

Professor Cook (left) is a cultural historian specialising in the history of sexuality and gender in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain, and in the history of London. He has a background in literary and cultural theory and strong interests in cross-disciplinary work and public and community history.

Previously a lecturer in modern history at Keele University, Professor Cook joined Birkbeck in 2005. He is Birkbeck Director of the Raphael Samuel History Centre and an editor of *History Workshop Journal*. He is also co-convenor of Radical Histories/Histories of Radicalism, an international conference and public history festival to be held in July 2016, which will commemorate 20 years since the death of social historian Raphael Samuel and 40 years since the founding of the *History Workshop Journal*.

A member of the steering committees of the Birkbeck Institute of Gender and Sexuality and the Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image, Professor Cook has advised on a number of community and oral history projects, including for the London Metropolitan Archives, Pink Singers and Stonewall/GALOP. He regularly participates in television and radio news and documentaries.

In 2014, Professor Cook published *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London* and *Queer Cities, Queer Cultures: Europe since 1945* (edited with Jennifer Evans). He was also awarded a National Teaching Fellowship by the Higher Education Academy for his work at Birkbeck and in archive and community settings.

Professor Cook is currently working on pieces relating to the AIDS crisis and queer community history.

## **Peter Wood**

### **Professor of Computer Science**

Professor Wood's research interests are in the area of data management, querying and analysis. His early work in proposing appropriate ways in which to query graph- or network-structured data has had significant impact in recent years, since it has become relevant to querying so-called semi-structured data, as well as data comprising the semantic web and social networks. He has been working on ways to assist users in querying such data by allowing their queries to be interpreted in a flexible way.

Other recent research has been in the area of combining recommendations for users and non-intrusive ways in which to elicit preferences from users when they are searching for recommendations.

He received his PhD in Computer Science from the University of Toronto in 1989, having obtained BSc and MSc degrees in Computer Science from the University of Cape Town (UCT). He worked in the Department of Computer Science at UCT before joining King's College London in 1998.

Professor Wood moved to Birkbeck's then School (now Department) of Computer Science and Information Systems in 2001 and was Head of School between 2006 and 2009. The Department is one of the longest-established computing departments in the UK, and is due to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary in 2017.

Professor Wood was recently appointed an Associate Editor of *The Computer Journal*.

# Teaching excellence

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She combines an innovative, often interdisciplinary approach to pedagogy with a strong commitment to ethics and responsibility in the teaching of marketing.

## Inspiring and innovative teaching are the hallmarks of Dr Wendy Hein, winner of the 2015 Birkbeck Excellence in Teaching Award

In addition to recognising the achievements of our students, Birkbeck also commends members of the College's teaching community each year.

In June 2015, Dr Wendy Hein, Lecturer in Marketing within the Department of Management, was recognised for her innovative and interdisciplinary approach to teaching, learning and assessment in an annual Birkbeck award scheme – the Birkbeck Excellence in Teaching Award (BETA).

An integral part of the College's learning and teaching strategy, BETA supports and encourages excellence in teaching and learning, by providing formal recognition of pedagogic achievement.

Dr Hein co-ordinates a working group within the marketing subject discipline that seeks to integrate gender equality into management education – a group which forms part of the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education.

In her teaching role, Dr Hein seeks to integrate these transdisciplinary approaches into her two main marketing modules on consumer behaviour and public relations. Specifically, she aims to be particularly innovative in developing assessment that facilitates critical and transformative learning.

Commenting on Dr Hein's selection for the 2014–2015 BETA Award, lead panellist

Dr Elizabeth Hoult, from Birkbeck's Centre for Transformative Practice in Learning and Teaching, said: "My fellow panel members and I extend our warm congratulations to Wendy for her selection for the award.

"We were very impressed with the way that she combines an innovative, often interdisciplinary approach to pedagogy with a strong commitment to ethics and responsibility in the teaching of marketing."

Professor Kevin Ibeh, Head of the Department of Management, added his congratulations to Dr Hein for her achievement. He said: "The Department salutes and celebrates her wonderful achievement as it illustrates, yet again, the healthy symbiosis between active research engagement and the delivery of top-quality student learning experience."

Commenting on her selection for the accolade, Dr Hein said: "I feel extremely privileged to have my work recognised by the panel. I hope to further emphasise the importance of teaching, on a micro and macro scale, and the need to acknowledge opportunities and responsibilities we have as educators.

"I am very grateful that Birkbeck values my initiatives and it gives me great motivation to continue further in this direction."



# BACK FROM THE DEAD

Zombies are undergoing a cultural rebirth through tv, apps and even World Zombie Day. But these late arrivals are merely the latest phase in our obsession with the undead, says Professor Roger Luckhurst

Main image: Karen Cooper, the trowel-wielding zombie in *Night of the Living Dead*

You can't really move for hordes of the undead these days. *The Walking Dead* is one of the most successful TV series ever. It now has a spin-off, unimaginatively titled *Fear the Walking Dead*. On World Zombie Day there are 'zombie walks' in more than one hundred cities around the world, thousands choosing to shuffle around in ghastly make-up.

You can spice up your morning jog by listening to 'Zombie Run', an app that surrounds you with the sound of zombies chasing you down. The teenager in the next room is probably shooting zombies in a computer game right now. We have zombie governments, zombie companies, zombie stocks and shares, zombie computers. And I've definitely been to zombie committees with zombie professors.

This is the metaphor that ate the world. The zombie was for a long time the lowliest form of pulp horror monster, poor cousin to the elegant, aristocratic vampire or the vengeful Egyptian mummy. The mindless, ravenous hordes of zombies poured through despised comics in the 1950s, until they were shut down in a moral panic. They were then picked up by B-movie grindhouse productions – some of the most abject European horror films ever made have delicate titles like *Cannibal Holocaust* or *Zombie Flesh Eaters*. I wouldn't necessarily recommend them.

As a cultural historian of supernatural beliefs and Gothic literature, I am always interested in the origins of these monsters, how they emerge from the cultural margins and over the centuries steadily march into our mainstream culture and colonise our imaginations.

Standard film histories of the zombie tend to start with the low-budget *White Zombie*, made in 1932. It starred Bela Lugosi as Murder Legendre, in command of a crew of zombie workers in his factory. If he looks a bit like Count Dracula, that's because Lugosi had just starred in the Universal Studios adaptation of *Dracula* (one of the films that prompted the 'H for Horrific' film classification) and they even used the same sets, hired at night on the cheap.

But this film is regarded merely as a prelude to the true emergence of the modern zombie film, launched by George Romero with *Night of the Living Dead* in 1968. This extraordinary B-movie, made completely outside the studio system, spoke to the disordered, revolutionary times, and achieved the feat of being the first midnight cult movie but was also lauded by the intellectuals of New York's Museum of Modern Art as a genuine work of art. Romero set up the rules that are still followed: the retreat of survivors to a last redoubt, fortified against the undead; the bickering and arguments and utterly stupid escape plans; the steady depletion of the survivors; the collapse of the defences; the engulfment by the zombie hordes; apocalypse now. Sometimes one or two are allowed to escape, and start the cycle all over again.

The films are important, of course, but they are really a late addition to a century of travel writing and anthropology. The first version

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The films are important, but they are really a late addition to a century of travel writing and anthropology.

of the zombie actually emerges from the slave plantations of the islands of Haiti and the French Antilles, particularly Martinique. Although there is much speculation about the origin, the word in West African languages (*ndzumbi* means 'corpse' in Mitsogo, *nzambi* 'the spirit of a dead person' in Kongo), the word *zombi* first appears in the English language in Lafcadio Hearn's travel narrative *Two Years in the French West Indies* in 1889. Hearn keeps asking what the Creole word means: he is told, variously, that it is a three-legged horse, a hanged man, a five-foot tall dog, or a fourteen-foot tall woman. He is understandably bewildered and cannot fix it down.

Zombie acquires its last 'e' and its association with a physical, lumbering corpse with the publication, in 1929, of William Seabrook's *The Magic Island*. This is when it truly enters American popular culture. Seabrook, celebrated travel writer, occultist, sado-masochist, cannibal, Surrealist and spectacular drunk, included in his account of his visit to Haiti a chapter called 'Dead Men Working in Cane Fields', in which in the dead of night the astonished author is introduced to a group of plantation workers that the surrounding community believes to be undead zombies, commanded to work by their paymasters. Given that Haiti was at this time occupied by American forces, who were intent on trying to suppress native superstition while reimposing forced labour, the 'zombie' is evidently a product of this colonial situation. The chapter was the basis for the film *White Zombie*.

Actually, it turns out that the success of the zombie metaphor in the 1930s was less to do with film than with the invention of the notoriously potent Zombie Cocktail, made out of Caribbean rum (the liquor invented by slaves from brewing sugar cane). Tiki bars in America famously restricted customers to two zombies only, for fear of brain-dead stupefaction.

It became apparent to me during this research that the zombie of the present day retains, if in sometimes very disguised form, the trace of these origins in the brute realities of the slave trade, the dispossession of masses of peoples, the 'social death' of slavery, the working to death of huge numbers of people. If the zombie has become the potent symbol of the 99% enslaved to the 1% that rules the neoliberal order, is it not the perfect metaphor for our grim contemporary world?

Roger Luckhurst's book, *Zombies: A Cultural History*, was published in autumn 2015 by Reaktion Books.

# SETTING THE HUMANITIES FREE

The way in which researchers publish their work is undergoing a profound transformation, writes Dr Martin Paul Eve

In recent years, the fact that digital technologies allow us to disseminate work nearly ad infinitum at very little cost has profoundly changed the research-publication landscape.

Where previously scholars committed their work to journals that were printed and sold – often to small audiences – with the advent of the internet has come the possibility of giving free access to anybody who is interested, not just to those who can pay. This dissemination of research material online, free to read and re-use in this way, is called “open access”.

In some disciplines, like high-energy physics, open access is very firmly established as the norm. You can read many of works in this field without having to pay a subscription. In others, such as English literature or history, there is a long way still to go.

In 2013, when I worked at the University of Lincoln, I found this frustrating, since even universities often cannot afford access to everything they need. The project that I co-founded with Dr Caroline Edwards at that time – also now in the English department at Birkbeck – is called the Open Library of Humanities. Now run out of Birkbeck as a world-leading initiative to broaden access to the latest research in the humanities, the Open Library aims to address this disparity.

One of the reasons for the disproportionate lag of open-access growth in these subjects is that funding is scarce in the humanities. At the same time, even though the cost of reproduction is near to zero in a digital environment, there is still a cost in publishing. The labour of organising peer review as well as typesetting, copyediting, proofreading, platform development, digital

preservation, legal overhead, accounting and management must all be covered. If a publisher allows access to research without charge – so called ‘gold open access’ – then we must address how they can cover these costs in another way.

The answer furnished by many traditional academic publishers is to ask the author’s institution to pay. This makes sense. Academics write to be read, not to sell. If we need these services from publishers, then they must be paid for. The problem is that, with the dearth of research funding in the humanities, these disciplines cannot afford this fee, which can reach £1,500 per article.

### A new model for publishing

With a prestigious grant of \$741,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation made to Birkbeck, the Open Library of Humanities works differently. First, we are a not-for-profit UK charity, solely concerned with publishing academic material for the public benefit. There is no profit in our enterprise, which cuts costs.

Second, instead of asking individual institutions to pay for their own researchers to publish their work, which is unaffordable for many academic departments, we have solicited contributions so far from 110 universities worldwide that go into a central fund, out of which we cover our costs. Including contributions from institutions including Harvard, Duke, Carnegie Mellon, Princeton, and Yale, distributing this funding turns out to be highly cost effective at a rate of approximately \$3 per institution, per article.

By achieving open access in these disciplines with a totally novel economic model, we hope to demonstrate the continuing importance of



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**We do our disciplines a disservice when we fail to fully harness the power of worldwide dissemination provided by the internet.**

Above: Where books still soar in the imagination: North Beach, San Francisco (Torbakhopper, Flickr)

studying culture and history; the humanities. We do our disciplines a disservice when we fail to fully harness the power of worldwide dissemination provided by the internet. Many people have humanities degrees and would continue to read our work, and it is our mission to make that possible.

Over the next few years, using the Mellon grant, we plan to expand the platform. One of the most important things we can do is to persuade editorial boards that they should move their journals away from for-profit, subscription-based publishers to our online,

open and free-to-read platform. This is one of our goals and it is backed by strong political support for open access.

We also want to boost the number of contributing institutions to 300 or more as the economies of scale get progressively better. We intend also to build a technological platform that will facilitate inter-lingual translation of work so that cultural borders need not be determined by national boundaries.

We are only at the beginning of the project; we launched in September 2015 with seven journals. It is vital that the humanities make the transition

to full, open, digital dissemination if they are to survive in an increasingly hostile culture, and through the Open Library of Humanities, supported by Birkbeck, we aim to make this a reality.

Dr Martin Paul Eve is senior lecturer in Literature, Technology and Publishing at Birkbeck. He is a founder and director of the Open Library of Humanities and the author of the open-access book *Open Access and the Humanities: Contexts, Controversies and the Future* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

# All aboard the pink battle bus?



**Dr Rosie Campbell provided widespread media commentary on the election in 2015. Here, she writes about the race for the votes of women**

**Main image:** Harriet Harman takes Labour's pink election campaign bus to the Overchurch area of the Wirral in 2015. (Lynne Cameron/PA Archive/PA Images)

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**The colour of the bus generated many column inches that at least touched on the issue of women voters.**

At the outset, the 2015 British General Election campaign appeared to be less concerned with women voters than was the case in 2010, when the ‘Mumsnet election’ newsframe played a prominent role. The relative lack of interest in women in 2015 was punctured by the arrival of Labour’s pink/magenta battle bus that visited marginal constituencies, targeting women voters. But did this reflect a gear change or just a little light entertainment to liven up a campaign described as dull by many journalists?

The 2015 election sits within a context of increased interparty competition for women’s votes that has gradually brought the parties closer together on ‘women’s issues’ such that all, with the possible exception of UKIP, are competing to be viewed as at least equally liberally feminist. In the 1990s, New Labour actively sought to undermine the Conservative party’s post-war electoral advantage among women. Labour enacted legislation designed to further gender equality, and it used all-women shortlists to ensure the better representation of women on the Labour benches in the House of Commons. By 2005, the Conservative party was competing vigorously with Labour for the support of women voters; David Cameron adopted the language of liberal feminism, stressing the need for more Conservative women politicians, and fairer access to paid employment for women.

This party competition for women’s votes was noted by media coverage of the 2010 election, at least in the long campaign (the final three months prior to the election), and some claimed that the election would be the ‘Mumsnet election’, although the interest in women voters diminished after the all-male leaders’ debates during the short campaign (the final month prior to the election). In 2014, women voters were also a key target group during the Scottish referendum campaign (women were consistently less likely to support independence than men).

As a result of the heightened interest in women voters in both contests one might have expected women voters to be a prominent feature of the parties’ campaigns and of the press coverage of the 2015 election. However, in a 2015 blog for *The Guardian*, Anne Perkins described 2010 as ‘not so much a new dawn as a high water mark’ for interest in women voters; arguing that with the exception of the hoo-ha around Labour’s pink battle bus, women voters were not a central feature of news coverage during the long campaign. Labour’s bus generated a great deal

of publicity, not because the party was targeting women voters per se but due to its colour, which some described as pink and others as magenta. Either way, the colour of the bus generated many column inches that at least touched on the issue of women voters. Harriet Harman and the Labour party were accused of patronising women and of succumbing to the ‘pinkification’ of womanhood. However, the colour of the bus may have been a successful strategy, given that previous Labour party women’s campaign buses (of other hues) seeking out women voters in previous elections had been largely ignored by the media.

Returning to the issue of whether 2010 was the high water mark for interest in women voters, a Nexis search of UK national newspapers suggests that there was considerable newspaper copy devoted to the subject in 2015. In fact, during the long campaign in 2015, there were 142 references to women voters in national newspapers compared with 45 references in the same period in 2010. During the short campaign, there were 37 references to women voters in 2015 and 20 in 2010. Thus, at least in terms of newspaper coverage, women voters were arguably given more prominence in 2015 than 2010.

In 2015 there was no easily digestible, simple newsframe, such as the ‘Mumsnet election’ or ‘Worcester women’ which provided a journalistic hook for articles discussing women voters, but women voters and women’s issues were raised during the campaign. From a media perspective this may mean that women were less visible but potentially, perhaps, it might also suggest that the issue of women voters was more fully integrated into the coverage as a whole.

In her piece, Anne Perkins noted that politicians seemed finally to have realised in 2010 that women make up 52% of voters but that they seemed to have forgotten this by 2015. Alternatively, perhaps, the 2010 realisation may have led to a situation where, in 2015, women voters were perceived as a central feature of election strategy and not simply as another ‘target’ group.

Further research will compare social media and broadcast campaigns, but we shall have to wait for 2020 to be absolutely sure whether the race for women’s votes is still on.

This article is based on a longer piece published in the *Political Quarterly* co-authored with Professor Sarah Childs, University of Bristol.

# Global research reveals alarming rise in imprisoned women

Publication of the 2015 World Female Imprisonment List follows merger of the International Centre for Prison Studies with Birkbeck's Institute for Criminal Policy Research

New data released by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) in the School of Law at Birkbeck have revealed that more than 700,000 women and girls are in prison around the world.

The data were published in September 2015 in the third edition of the *World Female Imprisonment List*, which complements the ICPR's World Prison Brief database.

The analysis indicates that female prison population levels have grown much faster than male prison population levels since

around the year 2000, with the number of women and girls in prison increasing by around 50% in the past 15 years.

Among the countries with the highest volume of imprisoned women are the USA (205,400) and China (103,766 plus an unknown number in pre-trial or administrative detention). The next highest totals are in the Russian Federation (53,304), Thailand (44,751), Brazil (37,380), Vietnam (20,553), India (18,188) and Mexico (13,400).

Dr Jessica Jacobson, Co-director of

the ICPR, said that the *World Female Imprisonment List* "draws attention to the high and rapidly increasing numbers of women and girls held in penal institutions worldwide.

"These women and girls make up a small but growing minority of the total world prison population; they are an extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged group, and tend to be victims themselves of crime and abuse. The approximately 50% increase in numbers of imprisoned women and girls over the past 15 years should be of profound concern to governments, prison administrations and all who are committed to justice and penal reform."

The compiler of the list, Roy Walmsley, added that the data "should prompt policy makers in all countries to consider what they can do to limit the number of women in custody".

Updated by the ICPR on an ongoing basis, the overarching World Prison Brief is a unique and internationally renowned online database on prisons and the use of imprisonment around the world.

An invaluable resource to policy makers and researchers across the globe, it provides details on the prison systems of over 220 independent countries and dependent territories.

Alongside the *World Female Imprisonment List*, other publications complementing the World Prison Brief database are the *World Pre-trial/Remand Imprisonment List* and the *World Prison Population List*.

The World Prison Brief has been hosted by the ICPR since late 2014, when the International Centre for Prison Studies merged with the Birkbeck-based institute. Since the merger, the ICPR has launched a new programme of international, comparative prisons research that will build on and extend the existing World Prison Brief.

The work of the new research programme will include assessment of domestic, regional and global drivers of the use of imprisonment; collection of data on the composition, management and treatment of prison populations across the world; and thematic studies on prisons and the use of imprisonment in specific countries and regions.

The broader goals of the programme are to:

- promote high-quality public and policy debate, at domestic and global levels, about prisons and the use of imprisonment
- promote policies and practices which are human rights compliant and support the rule of law
- inform goals and indicators related to human rights and rule of law, within the post-2015 development agenda
- contribute to international research and data-sharing initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of comparative data.

For more information on the World Prison Brief, visit: [prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief](http://prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief)

## Coping with cancer: the impact on work or education



Birkbeck study shows that preparing working patients on what to expect from cancer treatment can almost double the odds of a positive outcome

Many working people who are diagnosed with cancer need to combine work with treatment. Work is beneficial socially and psychologically, but it is important to ensure that working patients with cancer are well prepared about what to expect. They need the right advice about what will happen and ways of coping with the challenges of combining cancer treatment with work life. Patient education can be empowering.

Research by Dr Caroline Kamau, from Birkbeck's Department of Organizational Psychology, has offered useful insights into this area. Her recent study involved an analysis of data from a Department of Health national survey of nearly 3,500 patients with cancer. Dr Kamau found that providing them with information about their tumour, its treatment and its impact on work life or education nearly doubles the chances of a positive treatment outcome (defined as completion of treatment with no further signs or symptoms of cancer).

Published in *BMJ Supportive and Palliative Care* in September 2015, the study found that patients who receive information about the impact of cancer on work life or education are 1.72 times more likely to have a positive treatment outcome. Patients who receive information about the type of cancer are 1.99 times more likely to have a positive treatment outcome. Conversely, the study found that patients who receive

information about the side effects had worse odds of a positive treatment outcome (0.65 to 1).

Interpreting the results, Dr Kamau said: "There are two main reasons why preparing patients seems to produce nearly twice better odds of successful cancer treatment. One is that patient education lowers uncertainty and the stress that comes with not knowing what to expect. Uncertainty is a known stressor that interferes with health, therefore reducing it will improve the odds of successful cancer treatment.

"The second reason is that preparation equips working cancer patients with knowledge about good coping strategies, including how to cope with the fatigue that comes with treatment through adjusting workload."

Discussing why information on side effects worsens the odds of successful treatment, Dr Kamau added: "It can increase rather than decrease uncertainty. It can trigger unnecessary doubt about the treatment process and make patients worry about factors beyond their control. This can give rise to negative coping behaviours that interfere with recovery." Looking ahead, she concluded: "The results showed good practice in cancer care, but future research and policy interventions are needed to ensure that working patients with other potentially life-limiting illnesses are receiving similar support."

Above, right: Doctor and patient in consultation (iStockphoto)  
Left: Women inmates bringing up their children behind bars at the central jail in Amritsar, India. (Hindustan Times/Getty Images)



Below: Searching for meteorites in Antarctica (Ralph P. Harvey (CWRU), Antarctic Search for Meteorites Program, NASA, NSF)



# Forged from ice and fire

Meteorites from Antarctica reveal the geology of other worlds in our solar system

A meteorite which has been transported over 12,000 miles from Antarctica to a lab in Birkbeck’s Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences has given us a new insight into the geology of other worlds in our solar system.

The meteorite from Antarctica – which is on loan to Birkbeck from NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Houston, Texas – contains fragments of granite, adding to the evidence that geological processes we are familiar with on Earth and which shape the planet’s crust are at work on other worlds in the solar system.

“Antarctica is a perfect source of meteorite material from other planets, because any which make it through our atmosphere end up lying on the ice, where American scientists go out on skidoos and comb the landscape looking for them,” says Dr Andy Beard, Research Fellow at Birkbeck, who made the discovery.

The international team – based at Birkbeck and at the Institute of Physics of the Globe in Paris – carried out detailed mineral, chemical and oxygen isotope analysis of the meteorite to more fully understand its geological formation.

They found a tiny fragment of granite within the larger meteorite, named EET 87720, which

was composed of material of a markedly different origin. “It’s likely the meteorite we were looking at would have been thrown up by an impact on another planet or proto-planet as debris, which eventually reached space,” says Dr Beard. “Eventually, these meteorites reach Earth and can provide us with an insight to geological processes outside of what we experience on this planet.”

The geology of the granite micro-fragment in the meteorite suggests that it came from a Mars-like parent body – formed at the very beginning of the solar system – which was undergoing very intense and volatile volcanic activity, indicated by the discovery of significant levels of sulphur trioxide in the rock.

“We found that the meteorite is very quartz heavy – similar, in fact, to granites you might find in Cornwall,” says Dr Beard. “Essentially what we have found is that processes which take place on Earth are not unique – they are the same on other planets as those which have shaped, and continue to shape Earth. It has knock-on implications for other processes which we think are exclusive to Earth, like the formation of life. We may be less unique than we think.”

# It's all about me

## Good quality me-time is vital for home and work wellbeing

Image: AMR Image/iStockphoto

In an increasingly fast-paced world in which working long hours is a badge of honour and stress is but a text message away, finding quality 'me-time' to decompress is a real challenge.

Research recently carried out at Birkbeck is fighting the corner of highly-strung workers in desperate need of time away from the glare of the computer screen.

Dr Almuth McDowall of the College's Department of Organizational Psychology has revealed that high quality 'me-time' not only improves your psychological wellbeing; it can also make you a more engaged employee.

"In the UK we have a long but not very distinguished history of a long-hours work culture, where people spend an awful lot of time sitting at their desk at work," Dr McDowall said, explaining the background to her study.

"But when you look at the evidence on long-working hours, actually after you reach 40 or 50 hours a week on average per week, your performance nosedives. You are not switching off. This has what we call 'cumulative effect' – a build-up over time – because our systems are not hardwired for our arousal levels to be peaking all the time. We need to have downtime to relax, and if we do that, we perform much better the next day."

To ascertain whether the quantity and quality of me-time was associated with better work-life balance, wellbeing and engagement at work, two studies were undertaken by Dr McDowall.

The first study involved 18 professionals completing a daily diary of their perceptions and experiences of me-time over a month. The second study involved 344 professionals, who completed a questionnaire regarding work-life balance, family relationships, engagement at work and life satisfaction.

Analysis showed that those who experienced high quality me-time – rather than the most me-time – enjoyed better work-life balance, wellbeing and were more engaged at work.

Dr McDowall, who presented her findings in early 2015 at the British Psychological Society's Division of Occupational Psychology annual conference in Glasgow, said: "Me-time is a much talked about concept usually because people lament that they don't have any.

"Interestingly we found that me-time doesn't have to be solitary and is more beneficial if it involves freely chosen activities. Opinions varied whether mundane routine tasks, such as housework, count as me-time – doing the washing up does not reap benefits for everyone."

When selecting a suitable me-time activity, Dr McDowall stressed the importance that it be something which is different from activities normally engaged in at work or in life. 'Active recovery' – being physically active and engaging with others – and volunteering were found to be among the most beneficial me-time activities.

In summation, Dr McDowall said both studies underline the important role that employers should play in helping their employees find their me-time.

She said: "I cannot stress how important it is. We have clearly seen that there are direct benefits for employers, so I think the duty is on them to curb the long working hours culture, but also to encourage people to try different things, such as getting fit."



# Blood

## Uniting and dividing

**Professor David Feldman, Director of the Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism, reflects on blood as a marker of shared humanity and difference**

**B**lood is something that all humans share: a vital force that courses through our veins – the giver of life. Yet blood also takes on other meanings which proliferate in an amazing variety of institutional and cultural contexts. Blood is both a symbol of shared humanity and a marker of difference; blood has frequently been used to divide one group from another and nowhere is this more evident than in relations between Christians and Jews.

Blood is central to Jewish religion and ritual and has long been used by Jews for their own self-definition. Yet blood has also been used by others to mark Jews' bodies and desires as different. This has often had profoundly negative connotations, as the Jews' uses of blood – perceived and imagined – have been a staple of antisemitic imagery.

The Hebrew Bible is full of blood: this includes the blood of circumcision, Abraham's covenant, the blood of the Passover sacrifice displayed on the doorposts of Israelite homes in Egypt, and the sacrificial blood of animals. Christian culture too endows blood with meaning. The blood of Christ is the source of redemption and, since early Christianity, the wine of the Eucharist has been held to become Christ's blood. Jews, by contrast, not only

rejected Christ, but, increasingly in the Middle Ages were accused of being instrumental in his crucifixion and of craving Christian blood.

These ideas and images concerned with Jews and blood possess extraordinary longevity and capacity for transformation. Britain in the early nineteenth century was the apex of modernity. Yet the blood libel, the accusation that Jews killed Christians to use their blood in religious rites, first framed in Norwich in the twelfth century, remained a credible idea. On 17 August 1840 a correspondent wrote to *The Times* under the moniker Sigma, asking: "will it be denied that the religion of the Jews was not essentially a bloody one?" Sigma's aim was to suggest that the ten Jews in Damascus, who in March of that year had been arrested, tortured, and sentenced to be hanged for the murder of a Capuchin monk, and his servant, might indeed be guilty of the crime. Their alleged motive was the Jews' desire to procure blood for a Passover ritual. If Jews really did believe every word of the Old Testament, Sigma suggested, the charge was all too believable.

The year 1840 was the last time the blood libel received any widespread credence in Britain. Five decades later, the Jewish polymath Joseph Jacobs wrote about one notorious case of blood libel: the murder of a boy, Hugh, in Lincoln, which had resulted in the judicial execution of eighteen Jews in 1255. He attributed some blame to the, 'injudicious conduct of the Jews in not handing over the body of the lad when they first discovered it'. Here was a measure of how the blood libel had lost credibility. The Jewish victims' innocence stood so far beyond doubt that their errors could now be owned.

Jacobs was a race scientist as well as a historian. At the same time as he consigned the blood libel to history, he vaunted the purity of Jewish blood. He collaborated with Francis Galton, Charles Darwin's cousin, who in 1883 coined the term 'eugenics' and was on a quest to trace the influence of heredity on different races and families. Together the two men ventured to the Jews' Free School in Whitechapel to take

photographs and, using Galton's technique of composite photography, they aimed to arrive at an image of 'the Jewish type'. In 1885 Jacobs delivered a paper on 'The racial characteristics of modern Jews' to the luminaries of the Anthropological Institute. He argued that Jews were, with minor exceptions, a pure race, unified by common descent. Inevitably, as he strived to convey heredity to a broad reading public, he reached for a sanguinary metaphor. He referred to those who were 'Jews only in blood' and those of 'half Jewish blood'.

It is tempting for us to regard the decaying credibility of the blood libel as one symptom of the march of reason, but Jacobs' participation in both the burial of blood libel and the birth of race theory should alert us to the fact that the history of ideas is not simply a history of progress. The Damascus Jews were never proven innocent. It was only when the ruling powers in Damascus and Alexandria were defeated in battle that the Jews' accusers fell silent. It was politics and war that shaped knowledge, not the reverse. And the same can be said for the doctrine of race. The doctrine of blood proved too attractive and too protean to be regulated by a handful of Jewish scholars. Jewish and non-Jewish scientists corrected Jacobs: the Jews, they agreed, were an impure race. It was this very mongrel quality that Nazi ideology seized upon. Here too it was war, not science, which ultimately defeated their bloody project.

*Blood - Reflections on What Unites and Divides Us*, edited by Anthony Bale and David Feldman, has been produced by the Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism to accompany the exhibition *Blood*, conceived in collaboration with the Jewish Museum London (until 28 February 2016).

The illustrated publication features specially commissioned essays from leading scholars which reflect on the religious, historical and medical dimensions of blood. You can purchase the book and find out more about the exhibition at [pearsinstitute.bbk.ac.uk](http://pearsinstitute.bbk.ac.uk)

**Right:** *The Circumcision of Christ* by Jewish priests, from the Tucher Altarpiece (Nuremberg c. 1440-50), Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum (Anne Gold, Aachen)

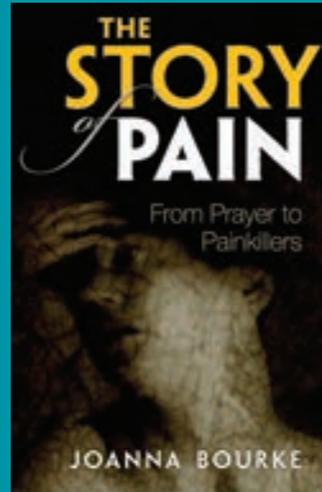


“ ”

**Blood has frequently been used to divide one group from another and nowhere is this more evident than in relations between Christians and Jews.**

**Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming**  
Debby Banham and Rosamond Faith, Oxford University Press

Farming was the basis of the wealth that made England worth invading twice in the eleventh century. With her co-author, Debby Banham, Lecturer in History, draws on a wide variety of sources to investigate how Anglo-Saxon farmers produced the food and other agricultural products that sustained English society, culture and the economy before the Norman Conquest. The picture that emerges shows an agriculture that changed from an essentially prehistoric state in the sub-Roman period to what was recognisably the beginning of a tradition that only ended with the Second World War.



**The Story of Pain: From Prayer to Painkillers**

Joanna Bourke, Oxford University Press  
Focusing on the English-speaking world, Joanna Bourke, Professor of History, tells the story of pain since the eighteenth century, addressing the big questions about the experience and nature of suffering. How have those in pain interpreted their suffering – and how have these interpretations changed over time? How have people learnt to conduct themselves when suffering? How do friends and family react? And what about medical professionals: should they immerse themselves in the suffering person or is the best response a kind of professional detachment? Joanna Bourke's investigation charts how our understanding of pain has changed completely over the last three centuries.

**Law, Psychoanalysis, Society: Taking the Unconscious Seriously**  
Maria Aristodemou, Routledge

This analysis of the connection between law and psychoanalysis by Maria Aristodemou, Senior Lecturer in Law, puts the legal subject on the couch and explores the relationship between law and desire, enjoyment and transgression, freedom and subjection, ethics and atheism. The process of analysis problematises fundamental tenets of the legal system, leading the patient to rethink long-held beliefs; terms such as 'guilt' and 'innocence', 'truth' and 'lies' acquire new meanings.



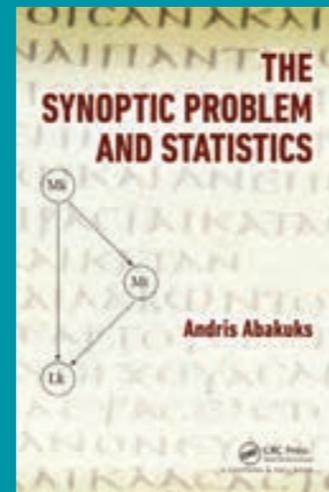
**Watch my Baby Grow**  
In collaboration with Birkbeck's Babylab scientists, DK

Written in conjunction with Birkbeck's Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, *Watch My Baby Grow* looks at a baby's developing abilities over the course of a year, from birth through every milestone. Following the journey of one child and her family, it takes a scientific approach to a very personal experience and explains, for example, the evolutionary reasons why a baby is unable to make speech-like sounds for four to five months, why crying sounds the way it does, and why various early abilities and reflexes exist.



**Birkbeck books**  
**2014-2015**

A selection of books authored or edited by staff



**The Synoptic Problem and Statistics**  
Andris Abakuks, CRC Press

Laying the foundations for a new area of interdisciplinary research, Andris Abakuks, Lecturer in Statistics, uses statistical techniques to investigate the synoptic problem in New Testament studies – a long-standing and somewhat controversial area, which concerns the relationships between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Andris Abakuks provides an introductory account of the synoptic problem and relevant theories, literature and research at a level aimed at academic and professional statisticians.



**Picturing the Closet: Male Secrecy and Homosexual Visibility in Britain**  
Dominic Janes, Oxford University Press

Dominic Janes, Senior Lecturer in Cultural History and Visual Studies, uses the concept of the closet to explore the history of same-sex desire from the eighteenth century to the present. What role did secrecy and denial play in relation to the visual expression of same-sex desire before the term 'the closet' came into widespread use in the latter part of the twentieth century? Chapters explore key moments and issues within the British cultural experience and make pioneering use of source materials ranging from art to fashion, literature, philosophy, theology, film and archival records.

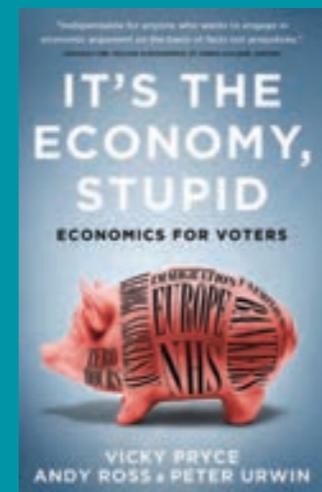


**KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps**  
Nikolaus Wachsmann, Little, Brown

In March 1933, a disused factory surrounded by barbed wire held 223 prisoners in the town of Dachau. By the end of 1945, the SS concentration camp system had become an overwhelming landscape of terror. Twenty-two large camps and over 1,000 satellite camps throughout Germany and Europe were at the heart of the Nazi campaign of repression and intimidation. Nikolaus Wachsmann, Professor of Modern European History, is the first historian to write a complete history of the camps. His acclaimed, accessible narrative pulls together a wealth of in-depth research, official documents, contemporary studies and the evidence of survivors themselves.

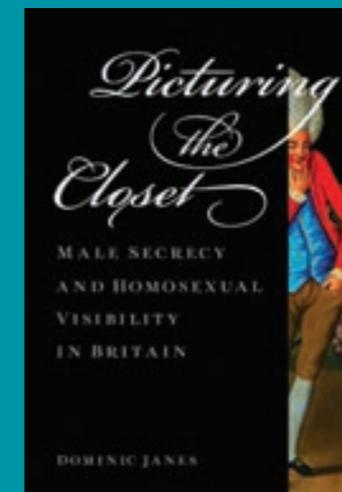
**It's the Economy, Stupid: Economics for Voters**  
Vicky Pryce, Andy Ross and Peter Urwin, Biteback

Pollsters are constantly worrying about our perceptions of politicians. What do their other halves look like? Who looks best when eating a bacon sandwich? For the voter, though, it all comes down to one thing: the economy. While good economic news can send popularity sky-rocketing, bad performance can blight a party's election chances for years. But it's rarely clear who is responsible for what – especially when each party's stances on the biggest issues of the day are clouded in rhetoric rather than grounded in hard economic fact. With his co-authors, Andy Ross, Associate Lecturer in Economics, explodes some of the most entrenched myths of British political debate.



**Agricultural Finance: From Crops to Land, Water and Infrastructure**  
Hélyette Geman, Wiley Finance UK

Offering a comprehensive resource for understanding all aspects of agricultural finance, this book explores the agricultural marketplace and the cycles in agricultural commodity prices that can be the key to investor success. Hélyette Geman, Professor of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics, applies her industry expertise to a wide range of topics, including agricultural insurance, energy, shipping and bunker prices, sustainability and farming risk-management.



**Picturing the Closet: Male Secrecy and Homosexual Visibility in Britain**  
Dominic Janes, Oxford University Press

Offering a comprehensive resource for understanding all aspects of agricultural finance, this book explores the agricultural marketplace and the cycles in agricultural commodity prices that can be the key to investor success. Hélyette Geman, Professor of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics, applies her industry expertise to a wide range of topics, including agricultural insurance, energy, shipping and bunker prices, sustainability and farming risk-management.

# Our students



## Noor Din

MSc Advanced Computing Technologies (Data Analytics)

“I had been buying lots of books and looking into MOOCs [massive open online courses], webinars and attending events, but I realised I wanted formal teaching in a structured way, and a programme with an externally recognised qualification.

“I needed more structure and interaction than a MOOC. Here at Birkbeck, there’s both formal teaching, but also peer-to-peer learning, which is so important.

“I wanted to pivot away from business analysis into big data analytics. In my mind, there is no harm in keeping yourself current and ahead of the competition. So that was the start of my journey into Birkbeck.

“I’m following the advice of the careers service to build a professional digital presence. This is probably the single best piece of advice I’ve had.

“I think studying here has re-engaged my thirst for knowledge. I’ve always had that, but have been so busy with work that I had forgotten how much I love studying. This has reminded me how much I enjoy it.”

Follow Noor Din on Twitter @NoorDinTech

## Ian McDonald

LLB (Law)

“I had been working in journalism for some time, but after moving into PR and communications at the legal NGO Liberty, I was surrounded by lawyers all day and that inspired me and made me realise I wanted to study law.

“Birkbeck was one of the first names that came up, and when I realised that it was an evening university it seemed ideal, as I wanted to keep working during the day.

“A lot of my friends don’t go to university and I was the first person in my family to go. I am twice the thinker I was, twice the writer I was, I am more confident, my public speaking has improved and I just know that I’m more employable and a more serious prospect for going on and building my career.

“I’m now studying for the Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL) at the University of Oxford, the university’s equivalent of a Master’s in Law. It is one of the most highly regarded in the Common Law world.”

## Stella Asante

BA Linguistics and Language (Japanese)

“Education has always been highly valued in my family, but back home we haven’t had much opportunity, so I’m pretty much the first person in my family to go to university.

“I chose Birkbeck because it is very diverse. When I first came into the open evening, it felt like I could actually fit in.

“When I first thought of university, it was quite intimidating, but coming to open evenings, going to taster days, really helps you get a feel for what you might be interested in. And it kind of debunks all the myths you hear about university being this big scary place; it’s really fine. I would also suggest speaking to people at the university, maybe emailing someone in the department; they can really help you out and give you an insight into other choices you might have in subjects.”

## Amina Rahman

MSc Management Consultancy and Organisational Change

“Returning to the classroom environment after many years away was daunting, I have to say, what with being in class with people who had already done degrees. But it was rewarding at the same time. It was a very inclusive environment.

“The diversity of the people that came through on my course was great, and I feel lucky to have made so many great friends. Having people who are on the same journey as you really motivates you to get on.

“My main personal goal has been to move into consultancy and to transition from the public sector to the private sector. I’ve proved to myself and others that it can be done. Recruitment organisations who I met with previously said it wouldn’t be possible to make both changes at the same time, but I’ve managed it. You have to believe in yourself.

“Having this qualification of a Master’s degree from a reputable university gave me the confidence and clout to make this change in my life.”

Amina has recently become a change management consultant for Chaucer Consulting – a firm specialising in the delivery of technology and data-enabled change for global clients.

Our students come from all walks of life, but what unites them is ambition and a drive to succeed

## Brooke Johnson

BSc Geology

“Being at Birkbeck, I really felt like I was turning my life around. Before coming here, the real low point came when I was working in a call centre. There was nothing wrong with the job or the people, but I found the call centre culture to be dehumanising.

“This has completely changed my life. I went from feeling like I was a burden on everyone around me to having a bright future. It’s like I’m a completely different person to the guy who sent off the application form.

“During my time at the College I was diagnosed with dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. The department did everything they could to support, such as giving me extra time in exams.

“I’ve now started a PhD at Oxford University. It’s strange, but I’m now not able to imagine how my life could have turned out any other way. No-one can decide what your limits and abilities are apart from you. And you won’t know unless you give it a go.”

## Johanna Haffenden

MSc Education, Power and Social Change

“I have a BSc in Sociology from my native Colombia, in South America, but now that I live in the UK I felt I really needed to add to my CV. I researched many courses, but Birkbeck’s MSc Education, Power and Social Change really appealed.

“I took two years to complete the MSc part-time. The course absolutely delivered what I wanted. Analysing different concepts of power and social change – and linking them to education – was very relevant to the work I wanted to be doing.

“I’m now a data manager for a support service linked to a local authority. I work with people with varying degrees of deafness, and as a data manager I analyse trends, look at the quantitative data and this is used to inform our policies and shape our practices. Completing the MSc definitely helped me in getting my job, as well as my ability to do the job.

“For me, the choice was strategic – I regularly reminded myself what I was doing this for. I’m now doing the job I wanted. Doing the MSc was one of the best investments I have made.”

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

# New Fellows



## Joy Manners

Joy Manners was appointed an independent Governor of Birkbeck in 2005 and has made a significant contribution to the College in that time, serving on the Audit Committee since 2008 and becoming Chair of that committee in 2012. Her role as a Governor came to an end in September 2015, and Birkbeck is delighted that she will be continuing her involvement with the College as a Fellow.

A geography graduate of University College London, Joy had a 30-year career in Shell International Petroleum Company, initially in group planning and later as a public affairs executive. She was an independent member of the Council of the University of London between 1999 and 2008 and was a member of its Audit Committee and External Degrees Committee.

She said: "Since I became a Governor at Birkbeck, I have been so impressed by the vision and dedication of the Master and all the staff to ensuring Birkbeck is a leading research institution providing top-class education for all its students, whatever their circumstances. For their part, the focus and commitment of Birkbeck students is truly inspirational. I feel privileged to have been involved with such a special place."

## Daniel Peltz

Daniel Peltz is Chief Executive of London Freeholds Ltd, the specialist retail property investor, which he founded in 2002 following a career in property and asset management with companies including GUS Plc and The British Land Company Plc. He is Chairman of Technion UK, which supports the Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology, and is an honorary Fellow of that Institute.

A trustee of many charitable organisations, Daniel is also treasurer of both the Anna Freud Centre and the Institute of Jewish Studies at University College London. He has been a panellist on the Education Panel of The Wolfson Foundation for many years. He sits on the Finance and Estates Committees of the Marylebone Cricket Club, and is also Deputy Chair of Lord's Community Group.

Daniel's involvement at Birkbeck dates from when he gained an MA Renaissance Studies in 2009. He has shown a significant commitment to the College, not only in providing funds for the creation in 2013 of the Peltz Gallery (see also p48), and the Peltz postgraduate scholarships, in the School of Arts, but also by being a member of the Estates Committee, where he advises the governors on property matters.

Speaking of his time studying at Birkbeck, Daniel said: "It was incredibly inspiring to study in the company of such committed people, and the quality of the teaching was exceptional. I got so much out of my time at Birkbeck and, wherever possible, I feel it's important for alumni to give something back."

## Professor Dorothy Porter

Professor Dorothy Porter is a distinguished historian of medicine and a former head of the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology at Birkbeck.

Now Professor in History of the Health Sciences at the University of California, Professor Porter was based at Birkbeck for much of her career and was active on major College boards. She has published widely in academic journals in history, literary studies and in medical journals including the *BMJ* and *The Lancet*.

Professor Porter obtained her first degree from the University of Sussex and her doctorate from University College London. After residencies in American universities including UCLA and Harvard, she joined Birkbeck in 1991, becoming Wellcome Reader in the History of Medicine and then Professor in the History of Science and Medicine in 1998.

While at Birkbeck her numerous internationally renowned academic publications included the influential monograph *Health, Civilisation and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times*. In addition she edited many volumes on the history of social medicine, medical ethics, public health and the politics of medicine. Currently she is writing a book entitled *Tremor: A History of Parkinson's Disease*.

Professor Porter retains close ties to Birkbeck through regular visits and seminar presentations and co-organising of conferences. She continues to advocate for Birkbeck with the Wellcome Trust and other bodies.

Elected annually by the College Governors, the award of an Honorary Birkbeck Fellowship recognises individuals who have either given outstanding service, which may include philanthropic support to Birkbeck, or who have attained distinction in their fields or in connection with the College

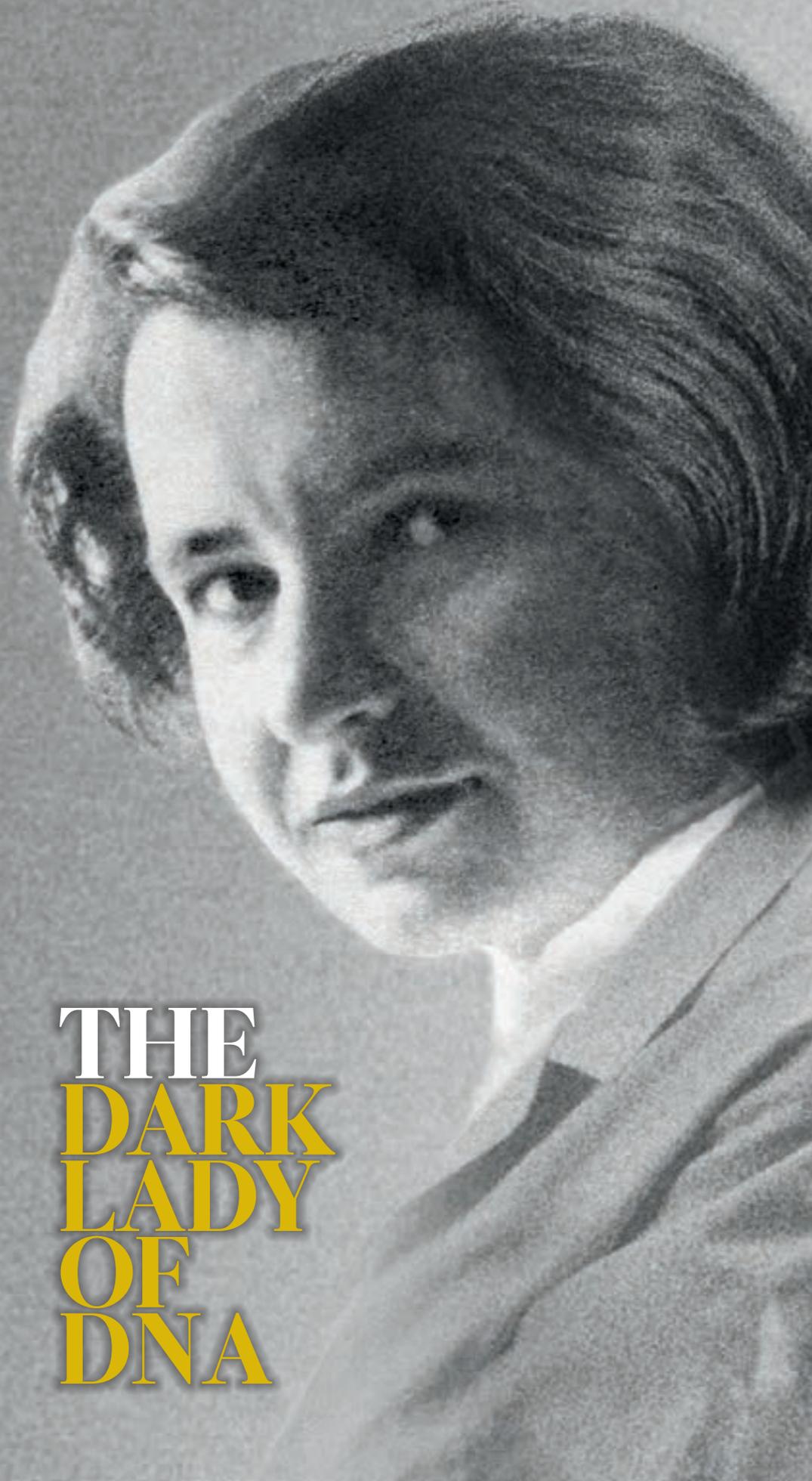
## The Honourable Mrs Laura Wolfson-Townsley

The Honourable Mrs Laura Wolfson Townsley is a Trustee of the Wolfson Foundation and is Chairman of the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust.

The Wolfson charities support and promote excellence and have a long tradition of funding for higher education. Mrs Wolfson Townsley is also an honorary fellow of Technion and of King's College London. In 2013, the Wolfson family were awarded the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy.

She said: "I am delighted to be associated with Birkbeck in this way. I greatly admire the work of the College and the leadership of the Master. The way in which Birkbeck offers opportunities to people across a vast array of subjects is inspiring. The Wolfson Foundation has been very happy to have been able to provide support."

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



# THE DARK LADY OF DNA

Left: Rosalind Franklin (Science Photo Library)  
Right: Nicole Kidman plays Franklin in *Photograph 51* (Johan Persson)

## The life of Birkbeck scientist Rosalind Franklin was celebrated on London's West End stage in 2015. But who was she, and what is her legacy?

The legacy of Dr Rosalind Franklin is much debated. Before her untimely death in 1958 at the age of 37, the sharp-minded crystallographer was a pioneering force in the biological sciences, most famous for her contributions towards photographing, and indeed discovering, the structure of life itself – the DNA double helix.

But when the Nobel Prize was announced, Rosalind's name wasn't on the list. Rather, it bore the names of her colleague and of her closest competitors. How she got lost in the race has been widely discussed and written about since, not least in three biographies. Each account espouses its own theories of how this came to pass, and how we should perhaps remember the 'Dark Lady of DNA'. Hidden heroine; ice queen of science; victim of 1950s sexism – Rosalind remains a multi-faceted figure in our collective memory.

### Photograph 51

The debate surrounding Rosalind – whose work at Birkbeck made an impressive impact – has been enlivened in 2015 with the West End production of the play *Photograph 51* by American playwright Anna Ziegler, directed by Michael Grandage and starring Nicole Kidman as Rosalind.

Set between 1951 and 1953, when Rosalind Franklin and Maurice Wilkins worked together – albeit fractiously – at

King's College London on photographing DNA, the play has been lauded by critics for telling the tale without judgement.

However, the way it has been interpreted by audiences, as in the case of the biographies which came before, once more highlights that Rosalind will forever be a mysterious and much debated figure of science.

"There has been a lot of talk about the play forwarding on this notion of Rosalind as a feminist icon, which Rosalind may not have wanted. And I totally agree, and it certainly wasn't my intention to raise her up in this way, and certainly not to show her as a victim," said Anna Ziegler, speaking to *BBK* from her home in Brooklyn, New York.

"Because I don't think she felt that she was a victim in any way, but as someone who was in control of her fate, aside from the cancer that killed her. So this has been a lesson for me in what happens when a work of art is out there in the public in a big way. It will be what people want it to be, or don't want it to be."

### Committed to her craft

As to why the image of Rosalind continues to draw our imaginations and attention after so many years, that much is uncontested.

In the *Daily Telegraph* at the beginning of *Photograph 51*'s 11-week run at the Noel Coward Theatre, Nicole Kidman explained her fascination with portraying the real-life scientist. "I think she was a product of that era," she said, offering an explanation for Rosalind's much discussed 'coldness' as perhaps being the result of having to swim upstream in a post-war, male-dominated scientific sector.

"She liked to work alone; she was fastidious, meticulous; she had extraordinary abilities mathematically and she was a superb biochemist, there's no doubt about that. She had problems at times working with her colleagues, but to me, that's perfectly understandable because of what she was up against. But she was a really committed individual to her craft, which is a beautiful thing to celebrate."



### The annual Rosalind Franklin lecture

Birkbeck's School of Science will recognise Rosalind Franklin's legacy in the annual Rosalind Franklin lecture, which each year will feature inspiring women scientists.

The inaugural lecture, to be held in April 2016 during the College's Science Week, will welcome Professor Elspeth Garman from Oxford University.

“”  
**Her time at Birkbeck was the most fruitful period of time in her life for her work.**

While Rosalind did not win the Nobel Prize, her legacy in the science community has been well noted – and not just the work she did at King's. Her time at Birkbeck, though not part of *Photograph 51*'s dramatic arc, plays a large part in how she and her contributions are remembered today.

Anna Ziegler said: "Don Caspar [a surviving colleague of Rosalind] said to me the other day that her time at Birkbeck was the most fruitful period of time in her life for her work. For example, she really did incredible work on the tobacco mosaic virus while at Birkbeck, and in fact she had lived and continued, she would have gone on to get a Nobel Prize for that work. People don't really know that about her because they associate her with the DNA story."

### Working towards real equality for women in Birkbeck labs

Anyone seeking proof of Dr Rosalind Franklin's legacy, in its most positive and undeliberated sense, need only take a walk around the Rosalind Franklin Molecular Biology Laboratory at Birkbeck, founded in 1997. The lab is housed in Birkbeck's Department of Biological Sciences, which in 2015 was awarded an Athena SWAN bronze award, the charter that recognises commitment to tackling gender inequality in higher education.

Professor Carolyn Moores, of the Department's Self-Assessment Team, said: "The male-dominated environment of mid-twentieth century academia is mainly long gone but there is still work to do. Participation in the Athena SWAN scheme is helping us to work towards real equality for women in our labs."

Regarding Rosalind's legacy, Professor Moores said it "is the power of rigorous fundamental science to lead to game-changing discoveries".

Anna Ziegler couldn't agree more. She added: "I think [Rosalind] would want to be remembered as someone who did work at a very high level and who was fascinated by uncovering some of the mysteries of the world. And she got to do that within her life."

# Philip Dewe – an appreciation



College Orator Professor Joanna Bourke pays homage to Birkbeck Vice-Master Philip Dewe, who has retired after 12 years at Birkbeck

Dresden, 19 October 1845. Richard Wagner was a stressed-out, 32-year-old musician premiering what became one of the greatest overtures in the history of modern opera: *Tannhäuser*. Wagner – with his melancholia, insomnia, debilitating skin disease, and painful digestive problems, all triggered by stress – was writing in a period where many were anxious about the over-stimulation of people’s nerves. As many of us today recognise, we are living in a world that seems so hurried, so tense: in short, we are too stressed.

This is just one of the reasons why we have been honoured to have had the presence of Professor Philip Dewe at Birkbeck. Besides being Vice-Master of Birkbeck from 2003 until this year, Professor of Organization Psychology, and midwife to University Square Stratford, in east London, he is also an expert on stress – and a fan of Wagner.

Dewe has tackled modern society’s epidemic of stress with characteristic verve. While insisting that stress is not the fault of the individual, he equally refuses to lay all the blame on organisations. Rather, stress emerges out of interactions between the two. Stress is relational.

But his research has been even wider than this suggests. He has grappled with the position of women in managerial posts, business ethics, and questions of moral intensity. He has explored the work-lives of officials in unemployment benefit offices as well as in Abby Life. He is as curious about sausage makers at a pork pie factory as he is about clergymen distressed by their own questioning of faith.

I like to think that Dewe was always destined for Birkbeck. A New Zealander

by birth, he holds degrees from both Victoria University in Wellington and the London School of Economics. After stints working in New Zealand, the UK and then New Zealand again, his life changed once more in 2000 when he joined the Department of Organizational Psychology at Birkbeck. Within three years, he was appointed Vice-Master.

His achievements in these posts cannot be summarised briefly. True to his philosophy – he advocates “quiet reconstruction” – he set about developing online provision, liaising with the trade unions, and chairing the Human Resources Policy and Strategy Committee.

For Birkbeck, his greatest achievement has been the establishment of the campus in east London. The decision to expand into Stratford occurred well before it was chosen as the Olympic site. It represented a commitment by the College to reach out to the area of London that had the lowest participation rate in higher education. In collaboration with the University of East London, Birkbeck sought to bring quality higher education to this region.

Dewe’s enormous charm, notorious sensitivity, warmth and understanding of all sides, and negotiating skills have smoothed our passage out east. His presence opened doors. Before the Olympics, he was already involved in major regeneration projects and he continues to be active in its post-Olympic legacy.

We have been extraordinarily fortunate to benefit from his research, vision and energy over the years and for the numerous ways he has contributed to furthering Birkbeck’s educational mission. We are honoured to know him and are grateful for his innumerable contributions to Birkbeck.



# Wartime accolade for Birkbeck alumnus

Beyond the trenches, a rewarding career in academia and the top French honour awaited Dr Tony Atcherley

In 2014, when Dr Tony Atcherley was awarded the highest French accolade, the Légion d'honneur, it came as a huge surprise.

"I was absolutely delighted. It's one of the most remarkable things I've had in my life," the 90-year-old Birkbeck alumnus said.

Dr Atcherley received the award for his contributions during the liberation of France in the Second World War. A teenager at the time, he served as a wireless operator in the Royal Corps of Signals attached to HQ 2nd Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment.

During his service, Dr Atcherley saw action throughout France, Holland and

Belgium, including the D-Day landings on 6 June 1944. His experiences on the front line seem like a lifetime ago, he explained, but receiving the Légion d'honneur offered a moment to reflect on those terrifying times more than 70 years ago. "One was stupefied almost, rather than frightened. And of course, if we were frightened, we didn't dare show it because it would be more disgraceful to us and our friends. You would have felt ashamed," he recalled.

"The terror came later on, when you were in slit trenches with mortars and shells coming down. As you were crouched in a trench, there was nothing you could do about it but pray.

Above: Dr Atcherley with his Légion d'honneur (Andrew Youngson)

That's when you really are frightened."

Soon after Victory in Europe Day, Dr Atcherley was posted to Germany as an interpreter, where he served until being demobilised in 1947. Returning to the UK, he worked for the YMCA in London for years and then decided to enrol at Birkbeck. The College offered him a route into academia – a career he had coveted for years: "Back then, it was difficult to go to university if you didn't have the normal background of completing a grammar school education and so on. Getting onto the ladder was difficult. The only chance anyone had was Birkbeck. It had a fine reputation, and some famous historians were there. It was full of very distinguished scholars."

In 1957, Dr Atcherley completed a Certificate of Philosophy at Birkbeck, studying under such prominent figures as Ruth Saw, Richard Peters and David Hamlyn. "Although the professors were very distinguished, they didn't have to be that way", he said. "It was a very friendly place and I learned a lot."

From there, he worked as a secondary school teacher of English and religious studies, and then moved on to higher education, latterly becoming a principal lecturer at the University of Brighton. Dr Atcherley took early retirement in 1980, and has since travelled throughout Europe.

In 2007, he co-wrote (with his colleague Mark Carey) a book entitled *Hitler's Gay Traitor: The Story of Ernst Röhm, Chief of Staff of the S.A.*, intertwining his experiences in the war with his academic interests.

Reflecting on his life since the war, Dr Atcherley joked that academia was simply a great way to feed his passion for reading.

As for the teaching side of his career, he had a few sage words for current academics: "You can't be defensive as a tutor; you have to be secure even if you don't feel it. I think it's great that modern students want to really get something important from their education at the end of the day, and not just a job, but something that develops you as a person."



## Nexus of the arts

In 2015, the Peltz Gallery at Birkbeck explored challenging global discourses through the lens of art

In its second academic year, the Peltz Gallery in Birkbeck's School of Arts matured into its mission to act as the nexus between creative interdisciplinary and experimental research and its relation to the wider world.

### Mangled Metal

The role of the arts in exploring political and humanitarian phenomena was a particularly strong theme this year, as was aptly demonstrated in *Artist's Impression: Mangled Metal* (8 June to 14 August 2015) – the showcase of the first artist-in-residence at the gallery.

A collaboration between the Peltz and Bow Arts, and influenced by the academic research of Birkbeck's Dr Gabriel Koureas, artist John Timberlake's installation reflected on the use of mangled metal as an exhibitionary strategy by museums of war in representations of Britain's 'small wars' from 1945 to the present day, and the War on Terror.

The exhibition's run, which coincided with the anniversary of the 7 July 2005 London bombings, included a discussion panel on how to commemorate survivors

and victims in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. Speakers included the Chair of the Tavistock Square Memorial Trust, Philip Nelson.

### Positive Living

A similarly powerful exhibition was held at the Peltz at the end of 2015, exploring the intersections of art, activism and medicine.

Curated by the Director of the Peltz, Professor Annie Coombes, *Positive Living: Art and AIDS in South Africa* drew together artists and campaigners who were at the epicentre of the South African HIV/AIDS crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The exhibition of fine art, print-making, painting, photography, beadwork and embroidery also launched the Birkbeck Centre for Medical Humanities and was opened by David Altschuler, co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of One to One Children's Fund – an NGO instrumental in the eventual roll-out of antiretroviral drugs to stop mother-to-child transmission of the virus in South Africa.

Positive Living coincided with a two-

day symposium on women and HIV/AIDS attended by senior political figures, medical researchers and artists. On World AIDS Day, the Peltz held a panel to discuss photographic representations of AIDS in the UK past and present with photographer Sunil Gupta and cultural historian Simon Watney.

Other highlights of the Peltz's 2015 series of 12 exhibitions and events included:

- *Shoot The Pianist* (26 March to 3 April), which revisited the underground art scene in Taiwan during the first half of the 1990s
- *AGORA* (23 October to 5 November), a stunning sound installation by composer Ain Bailey in collaboration with Dr Karen Wells.

This year, Daniel Peltz, whose generous donation helped to found the gallery in 2013, was welcomed as a Fellow of Birkbeck (see p42).

Professor Coombes said: "The Peltz Gallery has proved itself to be a great ambassador for Birkbeck, introducing increasingly diverse audiences to the extraordinary range of creative and critical research produced in the School of Arts and in the College."

“ ”

It was incredibly inspiring to study in the company of such committed people and the quality of the teaching was exceptional.

Daniel Peltz, p42

## An educating career



For History of Art alumna Caro Howell, the soundtrack of Birkbeck shall ever be of pennies dropping

Education has played a central role in Caro Howell's life. For starters, it has been there in her job titles, from her early years pioneering education and accessibility programmes for the likes of the Tate Gallery and Tate Modern, to her post as Head of Education for the Whitechapel Gallery.

Now, as Director of the Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square, London, it is clear that education has not just been the backbone of Caro's career, but in many ways it has also been the beating heart of it.

Reflecting on her own education, Caro explained that within weeks of commencing a BA Theatre Studies course at Warwick University, the Sussex-born student knew that her passions lay elsewhere, although she saw the BA through to its conclusion.

It was at Birkbeck, where she enrolled on the MA History of Art programme, that Caro found her feet. Her tutors were "invested in her uncertainty", and instilled within her a sense that it was okay to take time to find one's direction.

Caro said: "If Birkbeck has a soundtrack, it is the sound of pennies dropping. It's so exciting, that moment when you know what it is you want to do."

Since those early days at Birkbeck, Caro has propelled herself into a rewarding and challenging career, in which she has been able to share her passion for art and to find innovative educational vehicles for doing it.

That her chosen path has led her to the

heights of museum directorship, she explained, reflects the changes in how cultural organisations view education as a way to reach out to audiences. "It isn't about a conversation between a small group of specialists and their peers; it's about our multiple publics and their multiple interests and needs, and how they inform our work in terms of content, delivery and consultation. For someone like me, I think this is healthy and creatively stimulating. It's so enriching."

### Birkbeck at the Foundling Museum

In 2015, the relationship between Birkbeck and the Foundling Museum took one step closer, as Professor Lynda Nead, one of Caro's tutors while at the College, was chosen by Caro Howell to curate a major exhibition for the museum, *The Fallen Woman*.

The exhibition explored the heart-breaking experiences of Victorian women who, having 'fallen from grace', handed their infants over to the care of the Foundling Hospital. Drawing together the work of nineteenth-century artists, alongside a specially commissioned audio installation, plus official applications made to the Foundling Hospital at the time, the exhibition sought to reinstate the voices of these fallen women. "The show's impact will be felt for a long time after it comes to an end," said Caro.

The Foundling Museum explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity and first public art gallery.

Above left: 'Keiskamma Guernica' (small version) by Keiskamma Art Project: Veronica Nkosazana Betani and Nosiphiwo Magdswana, 2015  
Above right: Caro Howell (Foundling Museum)

# Obituaries

Lord Denis Healey, Dr Mary-Lou Jennings and Lord Gulam Noon are among the Birkbeck staff and Fellows remembered

## Sir Naim Dangoor CBE (1914–2015) Philanthropist

Sir Naim Dangoor, who died on 19 November 2015 aged 101, first came to the UK to study engineering at the University of London in the 1930s.

Returning to his native Iraq, he built a property and manufacturing empire. In the 1960s, following political unrest, he was exiled to the UK. Starting again with very little, Sir Naim once again built up a successful property development business.

In 1978 he established The Exilarch's Foundation, a charitable trust supporting educational and other projects in Britain and internationally. The launch of the Eliahou Dangoor scholarships in 2009, worth over £4m, benefited students at Birkbeck and elsewhere in what was estimated to be the largest private bursary or scholarship scheme of its kind in the UK.

These scholarships, along with countless previous acts of philanthropy, fulfilled a promise he had made to himself years earlier that he would find a way to thank the country that gave his family refuge after escaping Ba'athist Iraq. In 2006 Naim Dangoor was awarded an OBE in recognition of his work for the Jewish community and for education, followed by a CBE in 2011 and a knighthood in 2015.

Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck, said: "Naim Dangoor was a visionary philanthropist whose support transformed the lives of students. He was a great friend of Birkbeck and will be much missed."

## Lord Healey (1917–2015) Politician and President of Birkbeck 1993–1999

Denis Healey, the former Labour deputy leader and Cabinet minister who died on 3 October 2015 aged 98, was President of Birkbeck from 1993 to 1999 and contributed significantly to the life of the College during that time.

Lord Healey was Secretary of State for Defence from 1964 to 1970 and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1974 to 1979 under Prime Ministers Harold Wilson and James



Callaghan. He became deputy party leader in opposition, under Michael Foot, in 1980. His keen intellectual brain and sharp wit marked him out as a giant of British post-war politics.

Lord Healey took up the honorary role of President of Birkbeck in 1993. Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck, said: "He was a great friend and supporter of Birkbeck and passionately believed in the power of education to transform lives. He will be greatly missed."

## Dr Mary-Lou Jennings (1934–2015) Honorary Teaching Fellow, Birkbeck Birkbeck Fellow Marie-Louise (Mary-Lou) Jennings, who died on 3 August 2015 aged 81, began her long connection with the College first as a student, and then lecturer, in the Department of History.

Having left school at 16, Dr Jennings trained as a secretary and worked for a number of Labour MPs. She was elected a Labour councillor for Hammersmith and Fulham, becoming borough member for the Inner London Education Authority in 1974, and subsequently chair of its Schools Sub-Committee.

It was when her daughter Anna began her studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies that Dr Jennings decided, aged 45, to enrol on Birkbeck's BA History course, graduating in 1982, the same year as her daughter. An MA in Victorian Studies followed, and then a PhD, 'Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press, 1850–1892', which earned her Birkbeck's Armitage Smith Memorial Prize, awarded every three years for the best research in the then Faculty of Arts.

The result of her extensive period of study was a new career. In 1992 she became a part-time lecturer in British and Irish history at Birkbeck. She was later made Honorary Teaching Fellow in what is now the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology.

A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, Dr Jennings was widely published as an editor and collator of archival and manuscript material, and contributed extensively to the *New Dictionary of National Biography*.

She retired from teaching in 1998, but remained very much part of the Birkbeck community, serving as an alumni governor 1998–2002 and becoming a Fellow in 2003.

The eminent historian Roy Foster, who supervised Dr Jennings's PhD and later became a close colleague and friend, said in a tribute: "Her friends in the worlds of Irish academe and publishing were many, and her great gifts for friendship and enjoyment came into their own. Mary-Lou was a considerable scholar whose work made a difference: and so did she."

## The Rt Hon the Lord Noon MBE (1936–2015)

### Pioneering businessman, Birkbeck Fellow and 'Curry King'

Gulam Kaderbhoy Noon, popularly known as the 'Curry King', who died on 27 October 2015 aged 79, was a Birkbeck Fellow and a generous supporter of Birkbeck's work in east London.

Born in Mumbai, Lord Noon worked in his family sweets business as a teenager. Arriving in London, he founded a number of food companies in Southall, specialising in Indian cuisine. He established Noon Products in 1986, manufacturing ready meals for UK supermarkets, producing more than half a million curries a day.

Founder of the Asian Business Association in 1995, in the same year he donated £4m to set up the Noon Foundation, a charitable trust to support education and health projects. Beneficiaries included Birkbeck's Stratford Student Opportunity Fund.

He was awarded an MBE for services to the food industry in 1996 and was made a Knight Bachelor in 2002. He was created a life peer in 2011.

Lord Noon was a great supporter of increasing access to higher education and had a deep understanding of its life-changing benefits.

Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck, said: "Lord Noon made a significant contribution to the life of Birkbeck and in particular in his support for our students, where his impact will be felt for many years."

Left, from top: Sir Naim Dangoor CBE, Lord Healey, Dr Mary-Lou Jennings, Ormond Uren  
Below: Lord Noon

## Ormond Uren (1919–2015) Birkbeck lecturer, jailed for wartime espionage

Ormond Uren, who died in July 2015 aged 95, worked in Birkbeck's then Language Research Centre for almost 20 years, after an eventful early life.

Born in Western Australia, his family moved frequently before settling in Edinburgh.

In 1937, aged 18, Ormond embarked on an affair with a Hungarian countess and spent a year on her estate, picking up fluent Hungarian. In 1942 he was recruited by the Special Operations Executive for its Hungarian operations. It was around this time that he was also recruited by the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Four days before he was due to be parachuted into Hungary, he was arrested and charged with espionage. At his trial, it emerged that he had passed on low-level military information to the national organiser of the Communist Party of Great Britain, who was also a Soviet agent. Ormond received a seven-year prison sentence, serving five. His fellow inmates included Ivor Novello and Charles Douglas Home, brother of Prime Minister Alec Douglas Home.

After his release, he returned to Edinburgh where he completed a degree in French and Spanish. He worked as an interpreter for the World Federation of Trade Unions in Paris, only to be deported in 1952 when he refused to denounce Communist Party members of the WFTU.

A number of unsatisfying teaching posts followed before, in middle age, he took a diploma in linguistics at Birkbeck, after which he was appointed part-time lecturer and research assistant in the Language Research Centre. He worked for Birkbeck until he retired in 1983 aged 64. Fluent in seven languages, Ormond remained a voracious reader and crossword enthusiast to the end of his life.

## Professor Michael Wise CBE MC (1918–2015)

### Former Chair of Governors

Professor Michael Wise, who died on 13 October 2015 aged 97, was part of the Birkbeck community for more than 45 years, first teaching, then serving as a Governor and Chair of Governors under a succession of College Masters, and finally as a Fellow of the College.

Born at the end of the First World War, Michael Wise gained a BA in Geography from the University of Birmingham in 1939. Awarded the Military Cross for his wartime service, he returned to Birmingham as an assistant lecturer after the war, gaining a PhD in 1951. He joined the London School of Economics as a lecturer, becoming Sir Ernest Cassel Reader in Economic Geography at LSE in 1954 and Professor in 1958. He received the CBE in 1979 and retired as Emeritus Professor in 1985 after a lifetime of distinguished contributions to the field of geography.

His role at LSE led to his joining Birkbeck's governing body in 1968. For some years he combined lecturing at LSE during the day and at Birkbeck in the evening, reminiscing in later life about the pleasure it gave him to teach and discuss his subject with Birkbeck's mature students.

Birkbeck has also been saddened to learn of the deaths of other members of the College community, including Birkbeck Fellow and former lecturer in inorganic chemistry Professor Donald Bradley; staff member Jane Lucas, Assistant School Manager for Research, School of Business, Economics and Informatics; and Baron Moser, Birkbeck Fellow and champion of the arts and sciences.

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



# Why I give



A degree at Birkbeck took clinical psychologist Dr Tim Dunne's career in a new – and international – direction. He explains why he is recognising this turning point with a bequest to Birkbeck in his will

I'd always known about Birkbeck, even back when I did my first degree at University College Dublin in the 1970s. Twenty years later – in the early 1990s – after a successful career in clinical psychology, I was managing a psychology department in east London and decided, as it was my first senior management role, I needed to gain new skills.

To successfully manage the department, my manager originally wanted me to do an MBA. I felt that a qualification with a psychological component, reflecting my original specialism, was the way to go, so I enrolled on the MSc in Organizational Psychology (1992–1994).

Those two years were the best of my life in an academic and professional sense. I remember the College as a challenging and stimulating environment, and my fellow students were from a rich mix of different backgrounds and that added to

the atmosphere.

Studying at Birkbeck enabled me to work at the same time as pursuing my Master's – I found that really suited my needs in terms of my work–life balance. I was living in north London at the time and the library became my second home.

When I look back, the idea of Birkbeck – helping working people gain qualifications, skills and theoretical insights to apply to the workplace – has had a lasting impact on my life.

My degree led me into the next phase of my career as a management consultant. Throughout the nineties I worked as a management consultant both within the NHS and in the private sector, expanding my career internationally with stints working abroad, including in the USA, Australia and Switzerland. I found myself applying the knowledge I'd gained at Birkbeck again and again.

Now I've come full circle. I'm based in Ireland, practising clinical psychology in private practice, yet finding that increasingly people are coming to

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**Workers are expected to be available 24 hours a day and on holidays as well, through mobile technology.**

me with workplace issues, especially bullying. My time studying at Birkbeck still helps me understand the dynamics of the working environment.

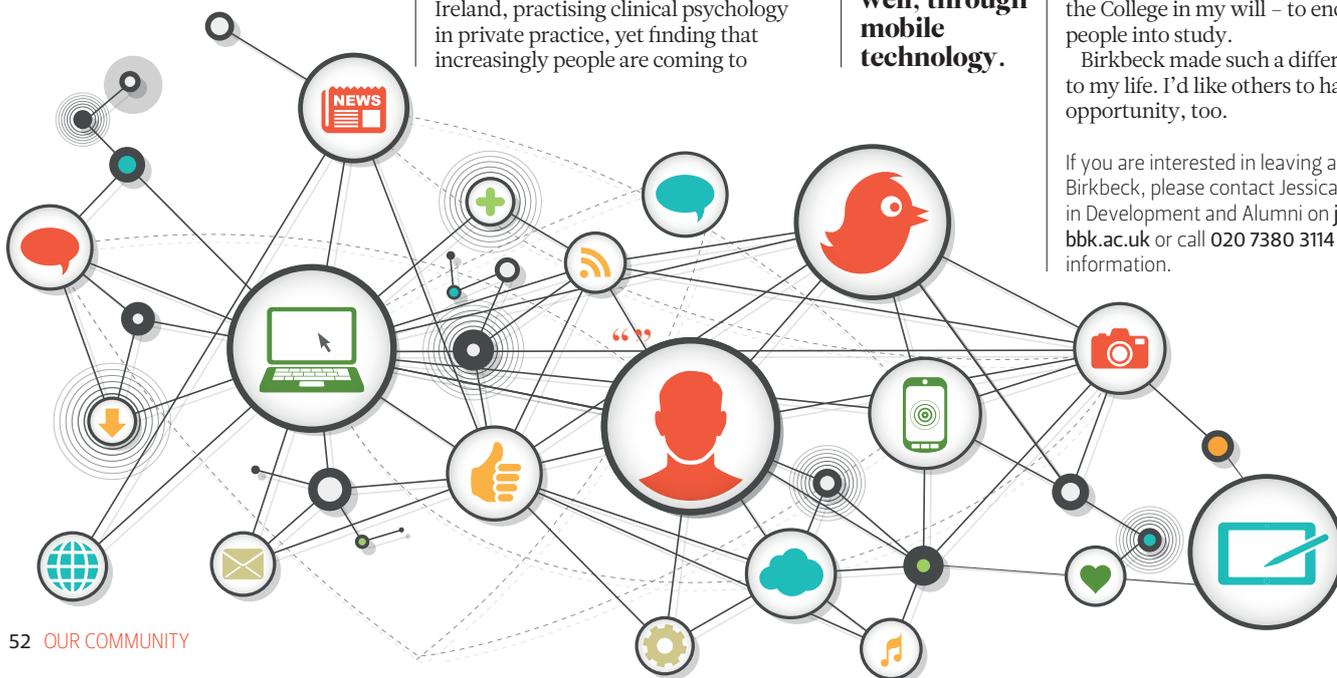
What strikes me is that there has been a huge change in work in the past ten years, which has increased stress; people's work–life balance is much fuzzier. Now, workers are expected to be available 24 hours a day and on holidays as well, through mobile technology.

The power of the organisation to control people's lives has increased hugely, and not always for the best. I think people need a right to their own life outside work. That's a huge change compared to when I was consulting into organisations.

Looking back, coming to Birkbeck gave me so much. I began thinking about how I could give back to people thinking about making the same decision, which is why I've decided to leave a legacy to the College in my will – to encourage people into study.

Birkbeck made such a difference to my life. I'd like others to have that opportunity, too.

If you are interested in leaving a legacy to Birkbeck, please contact Jessica Goulson in Development and Alumni on [j.goulson@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:j.goulson@bbk.ac.uk) or call 020 7380 3114 for more information.



# Birkbeck in numbers

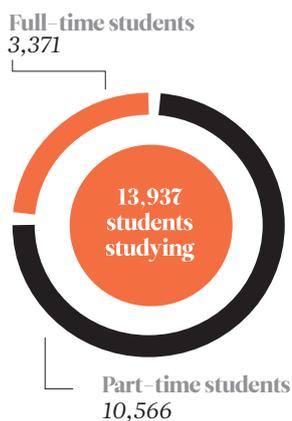
Source: All data from Higher Education  
Statistics Agency 2014–2015

If you think you might not fit in at university, think again. Birkbeck has a course for you, no matter what your age or educational background or whether you want to study full- or part-time

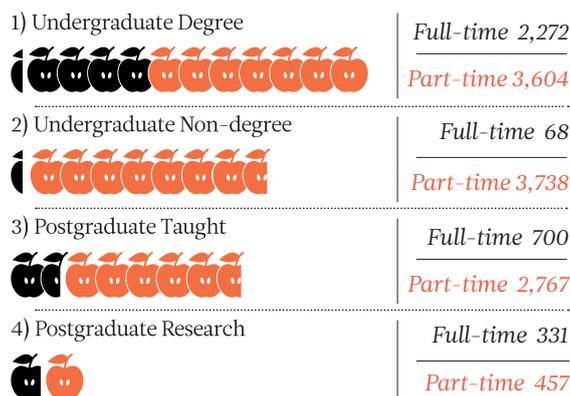
## The typical Birkbeck student



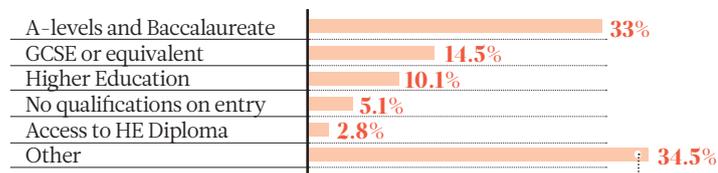
## Level of study



## Course studied = 500



## Educational background Undergraduate full-time students



'Other' qualifications include: HNC/D, Level 2, postgraduate and many more

## Total Raised

**£5**  
MILLION

1,608

Alumni and friends donated

266  
Alumni and friends volunteered  
1,242  
Hours of time

142

Students receiving work experience

through the Work Readiness programme

9

Corporate partners gave to Birkbeck

55%  
of students receive a bursary

**£1.6** million

left to Birkbeck in bursaries

# The last word



Nick Hillman, Director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, gives his views on the implications of the 2015 General Election for higher education

**H**arold Wilson is thought to have said, 'A week is a long time in politics'. In higher education policy at least, the Government elected in May 2015 has confirmed politicians can do a lot in a short space of time.

In their first few months in office, for example, Ministers announced: a new Teaching Excellence Framework to evaluate the quality of university instruction; a renewed emphasis on widening participation so that there are more first-in-family students; a swifter entry regime for new higher education providers; an exit regime for unviable courses and institutions; the abolition of student maintenance grants; a freeze in the £21,000 student loan repayment threshold; an increase in the age limits and repayment terms for the new postgraduate loans; more financial support for part-time students; a restructuring of the Research Councils; and a revamp of higher education regulation. To ensure the new system operates as it is meant to, Ministers also promised that a higher education bill would set a new legal framework. *Laissez-faire* it is not.

Before the election, many people predicted the biggest change to higher education policymaking would be sinking it back inside the Education Department. Michael Gove was known to have pushed for such a reordering. But this never seemed likely (at least to me), because David Cameron has long eschewed the constant Whitehall turbulence of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Long may it be so, because redrawing Whitehall boundaries blocks

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**The higher education sector has a great opportunity to shape the final proposals.**



Above: Jo Johnson at No10 Downing Street for the 2015 Cabinet Reshuffle (Rex Features)

reform by sapping time and energy. It doesn't even facilitate policymaking, because you just replace one set of boundaries with another.

It is not only the lack of Whitehall upheaval that has enabled the Government to implement rapid changes to higher education. It is also the energy and ambition of Jo Johnson in his first ministerial post, and the fact that we have the first newly-elected Conservative-majority Government for a generation. The last time the Tories won an election on their own, I was still a teenager.

But there is an untidiness to their proposals. The Green Paper is remarkably green. It signals a direction of travel but is not a detailed route map. For example, we know Ministers want Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to be replaced but we don't know where HEFCE's critical funding functions – for either teaching or research – will end up.

That may sound like a criticism. It is not. The higher education sector has a great opportunity to shape the final proposals. We should take the criticisms of those who say the document is awful with a large dose of salt. They typically come from the sort of people who can always give you a hundred reasons why any higher education policy from any government of any colour is disastrous, but who can rarely provide an answer to the question: 'What would do you instead?' Answering that is the hard bit of policymaking.

The Green Paper is a consultation document not a masterplan. If we do not like it, we have the chance to shape what comes out of it. If we still do not like the end result after the consultation is over, then we should indeed complain – but, in truth, that would partly reflect a failure on our part to shape the proposals too.

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