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

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

The week opened with a panel discussion on clouds as objects, metaphor and phenomena, considering these ephemeral bodies in contexts ranging from eighteenth-century meteorology and Romantic poetry to nuclear physics and psychoanalysis. Throughout the week, academics from Birkbeck and other universities joined legal practitioners to discuss the use of scientific evidence in legal scenarios. Subjects scrutinised included evidence in rape cases, the use of new technologies such as satellite imaging, and DNA analysis.

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

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

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

A number of Arts Week events were captured on podcasts and blogs, which can be accessed at www.bbk.ac.uk/artweek2014 Arts Week 2015 will run from 16–22 May. More information will be made available at: www.bbk.ac.uk/artweek

Business Week
Business Week 2014, which ran from 25–26 June, coincided with the FIFA World Cup and drew inspiration from the world’s greatest football tournament.

The theme for the series of public events was ‘From London to Rio: The business and politics of mega sport events’. Leaders from the worlds of business and sport explored the legacy of London 2012 and the impact of the World Cup in Brazil. Keynote speakers included: Richard Ayers, founder and CEO of digital media firm Seven League, who discussed the impact of digital technology; Adrian Moorhouse MBE (above), swimmer and Olympic gold medalist, who identified key factors in sport and their application to business; Neale Coleman CBE, deputy chair of the London Legacy Development Corporation, who reflected on the legacy of 2012; and David Bernstein CBE, former chairman of the Football Association, who highlighted challenges on governance-related issues in football.

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

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

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

Other topics discussed by academics from Birkbeck’s School of Science included Dr Atsushi Senju speaking on the importance of face-to-face communication for babies, Dr Irene Daunmorthel on mindfulness meditation, Dr Martin Ingoulide on the evolutionary secrets of garden plants, Professor Hilary Downes on asteroids and the Earth, and Professor Bux Cooper on routine behaviour.

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

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

The programme of events drew on the wide-ranging and exciting research being undertaken by scholars within Birkbeck’s School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, and also featured high-profile external speakers. The week included a panel on “Hobbesian Community” with Professor Sir Richard Evans (University of Cambridge), a discussion of politics and photography with Martin Argles (former photographer for The Guardian) and Birkbeck’s Department of Politics’ first writer-in-residence, documentary photographer and poet Carlos Buit. They debated whether Hobbes understood the concept of change in different disciplinary contexts.

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

To watch events from Social Sciences Week visit: www.bbk.ac.uk/science/about-us/events/social-sciences-week

The week opened with a panel discussion on the concept of change in different disciplinary contexts.