

book

The Birkbeck magazine Issue 20, Summer 2006

Not a big fan?

How the west wasn't won over
by the changing face of Japan



Welcome to the new look *BBK*. We were delighted so many of you filled in the readers' survey. The design struck you as an important factor in *BBK*'s success, with comments such as "very readable and user-friendly" and "professional and well-presented", with one reader saying, "thanks to all concerned for taking such care over it".

For many, *BBK* provides a strong sense of community, with answers including "it's great to maintain connections" and "it enables a feeling of camaraderie". One summed it up with the line: "I like feeling part of an academic family I really admire." Another said "it confirms and continues my good opinion of Birkbeck".

In this issue we showcase the innovative Birkbeck East project (page 1) and talk to Julia Goldsmith (page 15) about how Birkbeck helped her into the Liberal Democrat cabinet team.

As always, we look forward to hearing your comments. Please write to us at the address on the inside back page.

Part of the University of London, Birkbeck is a world-class research institution, a vibrant centre of academic engagement and excellence, and London's leading provider of flexible evening education for mature students.

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Cover photograph:
Geisha holding a folding fan
(Jupiter Images)

Full of eastern promise

Innovative projects win £8.7m HEFCE funding to extend teaching provision in London

Birkbeck has been awarded £5m by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to take its flexible, evening teaching provision to east London, which has the lowest higher education participation levels in the London region.

This ground-breaking project, known as Birkbeck East, aims to extend higher education into the heart of the 'hard to reach' communities by using Birkbeck's expertise to develop part-time, evening, undergraduate degrees offered locally in east London. Birkbeck will work closely with the University of East London (UEL), which enjoys excellent local partnerships and is recognised as a leader in widening participation.

Birkbeck East will extend participation in east London by attracting new students who would not otherwise engage with higher education. Birkbeck and UEL will co-ordinate course development, ensuring complementary provision by subject and time of day, increasing students' choice, and enhancing opportunities for retention and progression. A high priority will be the creation of new structures to help students progress between courses and levels of study. For example, routes will be available from the new Birkbeck Foundation Public Sector Studies to the UEL BSc Social Policy Research. Programmes are most likely to be in the subject areas of management, IT and community development.

Birkbeck is also the lead institution for the Linking London: Lifelong Learning Network (LLLLN), which has been awarded a further £3.7m by HEFCE. Linking London aims to



develop pathways and credit transfer agreements for students across a number of further and higher education institutions.

The Master of Birkbeck, Professor David Latchman, says: "We are delighted that HEFCE is demonstrating such support for Birkbeck through the Birkbeck East and the Linking London initiatives. These new projects give contemporary meaning to George Birkbeck's original vision of higher education for non-traditional students. With our partners, particularly the University of East London, we hope to make a significant contribution to local economic development by building relationships with local employers, including the public sector."

Professor Michael Thorne, Vice-Chancellor of the University of East London, comments: "With more and more students balancing their

academic programmes with paid work and family responsibilities, it is vital to offer effective part-time provision that meets the needs of our communities. We are delighted to be working with our partners at Birkbeck on this exciting initiative."

Market research by Birkbeck shows there is sufficient market potential of part-time students to achieve the Birkbeck East goal of recruiting 200 FTE (full-time equivalent) students in the 2007-08 academic year. By 2011-2012 it is hoped there will be around 520 FTEs. The project will also aim to recruit up to 1,000 continuing education and professional development students, giving a total of 1,700 by 2011-12.

Initially Birkbeck East will rent space, with a long-term aim to be based in a purpose-built facility in Stratford, signalling Birkbeck's commitment to the area.

Above: Busy commuters head to Stratford, as will Birkbeck in 2007 (JD Moore)

Passport to teaching

New graduate level programme set up for the refugee community with Home Office funding

A part-time teacher training programme for refugees has been launched by Birkbeck. The Passport to Teaching Plus programme – a nationally recognised postgraduate level certificate in teaching in lifelong learning – enables refugees in Greater London to access teaching opportunities in post-compulsory education, both in the UK and overseas.

In partnership with Reconnect, a not-for-profit organisation working for graduate refugees, Birkbeck was awarded £50,000 from the Home Office Refugee Integration Fund to launch the one-year programme this year.

Students spend one day a week at Birkbeck, plus one day a week or equivalent on teacher practice placement.

Course co-ordinator Jane Hoy submitted the proposal to the Home Office in collaboration with Theodros Abraham, Birkbeck lecturer and Director of Reconnect.

“We felt teaching should be given priority for this project because it’s not an area where there has been much investment within the refugee community,” says Theodros.

“There are 18 students on the programme this year from nine countries,” he says. “We’ve done a lot of work to spread the word in the refugee community, and we’re hoping that people can help support it in the future because we need resources for the second- and third-year programmes.”

Theodros left Ethiopia, his home country, in the late 1970s and lived as a refugee in Kenya until 1979. He came to the UK on a scholarship and completed a BA in Economics and MA in Development Economics at Liverpool and East Anglia.

“I left Ethiopia in the midst of

the military dictatorship when I was a university student. Many people were killed. It’s not a very nice experience, to be forced to leave one’s home, but once you are faced with that situation you have to make your own way.”

One of the students on Passport to Teaching Plus, and a class rep, is Alem Mengesha, 34. She is also from Ethiopia and hopes to eventually teach IT. “This course changes people’s lives and it means a lot to me,” she says. “It has influenced me very much and built my confidence.”

The second class rep, Albert Tadiesse Pokam, 31, says the course “gives you an atmosphere where you can easily discuss things and we learn a lot from each other”. Albert, originally from Cameroon, adds: “I left my country because I was involved in the political set-up after the election in 1997. I talked to journalists, which I wasn’t supposed to do in a dictatorship. I was endangered but I’m now settled in the UK.” Albert is the first student on the course to be offered a teaching post.

Similarly, John Morales, 38, is happy in the UK, having lived here for 12 years. “This course is very important for me because I’m thinking more specifically about how to prepare a class,” he says. “The opportunity to get a proper qualification is a big issue.”

Georgette Ahia Fausino Roro, 38, from Sudan, says that empathising with fellow classmates is a key factor. “That’s one of the best things about it. We are working our way through together because we’ve had similar experiences.”

Her classmate, Mojgan Fakharjan, used to be a university teacher in Iran for eight years in



Above: Theodros Abraham (Jerry Mason). For details, email j.hoy@bbk.ac.uk or visit www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/III

the art department. “I lost my job and everything and I had to start from the beginning, but I’m now getting some support, for example, this course is very helpful for me and we understand each other.”

Theodros stresses that his work with Birkbeck and Reconnect “tries to give refugees a voice.

There is an international obligation to provide refuge to those who need to be protected, but on the one hand, those who advocate on behalf of refugees often ask people to feel sorry for refugees, or emphasise the contribution refugees are making to the country. On the other hand, the tabloids write sensational news ignoring the underlying issues, so they are not doing justice to their readers. The issues have to be looked at within the wider context of the problem we have between developed and developing countries and its impact on global displacement.”

Birkbeck tops research league

The College beats all UK universities in research funding league table

Birkbeck has beaten such prestigious universities as Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and UCL to become the top higher education institution in a league table of research funding success*.

Research Fortnight analysts from the *Research Research* newspaper monitored how good institutions are at attracting funding for their research based on 2004-5 data from seven research councils, including the Medical Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

Birkbeck was successful in 48% of its grant applications – well above the national average of 25% for universities. Next in line was the University of St Andrews and Goldsmith's College, both with 44%, with Oxford coming in at 35% and UCL at 30%.

Professor Fiona Macmillan, the Pro-Vice-Master for Research, says: "We are very proud of this latest affirmation of the high quality research carried out at Birkbeck, which comes hot on the heels of the Queen's Anniversary Prize for the Centre for Brain Function and Development."

"It is very pleasing to see that this success is not confined to senior members of academic staff," she continues. "More junior colleagues have also made significant contributions to this achievement, which is consistent with Birkbeck's policy of supporting and developing the research potential of our academics at all stages of their research careers."

"Warm congratulations are due to all our grant holders. However, academic staff also know that



they owe a great debt of gratitude to our Research Grants and Contracts Office, under the leadership of Liz Francis, who works with great professionalism and grace in order to support Birkbeck's vibrant academic research culture."

The research councils decided to publish individual success rates for the first time this year with the aim of cutting down on unnecessary waste due to the processing of poor quality submissions for research funding.

*** This is comparing Birkbeck with other higher education institutions and excludes research institutes. To view the full league table as a PDF, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/news/researchfortnight.pdf**

Above: Crystals of a DNA repair protein attached to a piece of damaged DNA. For details about Crystallography at Birkbeck, visit www.cryst.bbk.ac.uk

Honour and glory for crystallographer

Professor Helen Saibil FRS has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society – an honour that is the UK equivalent of receiving the Nobel Prize.

The Royal Society is the world's oldest scientific academy in continuous existence, at the forefront of enquiry and discovery since its foundation in 1660.

"The Fellowship mainly reflects the work I've done since arriving at Birkbeck and owes a great deal to my present and former colleagues at the College," says Professor Saibil from the School of Crystallography. "As soon as I arrived, around 1989, interesting things started to happen. My colleagues were enthusiastic about developing the field of electron microscopy and several people approached me about their projects. In particular, a first look at the molecular chaperone protein GroEL changed the direction of my research. It continues to be a major theme of my work on protein folding and misfolding, which underlie basic processes in health and disease."

Professor Saibil adds that the friendly and supportive environment, and good students, postdocs and collaborators, have allowed her research to flourish. "It is a huge pleasure to get such recognition, but also a bit overwhelming. I don't publish a huge amount – I think it is more important to have something significant to say before completing a paper."

Student dig explores secrets of ancient Ewell

Local MP visits the site thought to be a religious complex

A Birkbeck training excavation in Ewell sought to reassess evidence of Roman activity found in the 1970s. The work focused on Hatch Furlong, where earlier digging revealed pottery, glass and coins, together with traces of a stone building and a 14-foot deep chalk shaft containing the bones of dogs, which may have been offered to the Roman gods as sacrifices.

These discoveries hint at the existence of a religious complex on the higher ground overlooking Stane Street – the Roman main road from London to Chichester – and the Roman settlement of Ewell.

Co-director of the site, Birkbeck's Harvey Sheldon says: "Our aims were to locate the find spots precisely and characterise the site. There appear to be a good number of shafts and other pits with ritual placed deposits. The stone wall found previously seems to be part of a large Late Roman oven. It does look like there were shrines and deliberate attempts to communicate with the underworld: feasts and ceremonies would not be unexpected. A report is being prepared and the National Trust will use the findings to manage Hatch Furlong's archaeology."

The local Conservative MP for Epsom and Ewell and shadow transport secretary, Chris Grayling, visited the dig, along with a number of local school children and visitors to site open days. Chris says he was "intrigued" by the work. "Something like this brings local history to life in a way that no text book could ever do."

He was equally impressed by the Birkbeck students on the site. "Birkbeck is a wonderful institution, it's unique and a great way of giving people the chance to

make a step-change in their career without having the often great difficulty of giving up work."

One such student is Claire Cock-Starkey (28), in the third year of her BA History and Archaeology and a full-time as an assistant editor. "I chose Birkbeck because I could study and have a full-time job," says Claire. "The first time I did a degree I regretted not doing history and archaeology, so I thought I'd go back and do what I wanted to do."

Then there are people who simply signed up for the practical dig experience, such as Tessa Gittens: "I'm enjoying it enormously. It is a wonderful interest in retirement and it's nice to be part of it." Sally Redhead, also retired, adds: "What's really impressive is how the local community is so involved. It's a real collaborative effort."

"There is a good crowd of students here," continues Harvey. "Some are tasting archaeology for the first time and some are more experienced. They find it interesting and obviously that enthusiasm communicates itself."

The dig was carried out between 22 April and 7 May, led by Harvey Sheldon of Birkbeck and Jon Cotton of the Epsom and Ewell Local History and Archaeology Society/Museum of London. The excavation was funded by grants from Surrey County Council, Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeology Society, Surrey Archaeological Society and the Council for British Archaeology South East. The work was completed on behalf of the National Trust, who own the site.

For details about Archaeology at Birkbeck, call 020 7631 6627, email archaeology@fce.bbk.ac.uk or visit www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/archaeology



Above: The bearded face of Silenus, one of the lost gods of Roman Ewell, looks out from this pottery fragment found in the area

Grant boost for labs

Geography research was given a welcome boost with the opening of joint Birkbeck/UCL thermodynamics and fluids laboratories at UCL in March.

Dr Diane Horn, a senior lecturer in Birkbeck's School of Geography, shares the facilities, which were funded by a £850,000 Science Research Investment Fund II grant. New equipment for the lab will measure waves and current velocities. "It's exciting that geography students have access to the labs," says Dr Horn. "I hope these state-of-the-art facilities lead to increased interest in physical geography at Birkbeck."

Lawful behaviour

A deep sense of the sacred nature of life prevents debate of the theoretical issues, says Rosi Braidotti

Distinguished feminist philosopher, Rosi Braidotti, is visiting Birkbeck as a Leverhulme Trust Professor at the School of Law until October. Born in Italy, raised in Australia, educated in Paris and based at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, she is delighted with her appointment.

"I just love Birkbeck. I was not prepared for the intellectual content of the School of Law. It's very much a community of scholars and there is a great synergy with the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities," says Rosi, whose *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* was published by Polity in February this year.

Her Leverhulme research at Birkbeck with Dr Patrick Hanafin is focusing on ways of dying. She explains: "It looks at how modes of regulating the body – also known in philosophy as 'bio-politics' and in my work get approached in terms of gender and ethnicity – engender new relationships to

ways of dying. There are obvious health issues to look at, for example HIV, but also traditional diseases like malaria and TB, plus the more silent epidemics, such as eating disorders, depression and suicide. It is very interesting to see how complicated it is for the policy-makers to relate to these issues. I see it as a structural problem that challenges our political economy and shows the limitations of our modes of governance. So it became a project on new ways of dying, which sounds depressing but isn't."

"I would also like to look at the variations round the theme of suicide, including youth suicide. If not active suicide, then a desire to step aside from life: disaffection, apathy, melancholia. Our entire way of thinking about one's right to 'make something of your life' is saturated with Christian assumptions. There is a deep sense of the sacred nature of life that prevents proper discussion of



Above: Leverhulme Trust Professor, Rosi Braidotti

On 14 October Rosi will convene an event at the Tate Modern with Donna Haraway as the lead speaker, on the issue of 'forensic futures and ways of dying'. For details, see the Tate Modern talks programme

the questions. It also corners all the oppositions into a position of alleged immorality and nihilism, which is not what I am defending at all. I want more complexity in this discussion about ways of dying. There is a great deal of horror being done in the name of the sacredness of life. This translates into extra pressure to pull through whatever trauma, depression or difficulty people have – as if it was a moral flaw to be depressed. In fact, I think at times it is the only decent reaction to the world we are living in. We need to look at death as a multi-layered phenomenon."



QUEEN'S PRIZE

The Queen presented Birkbeck with its Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education on 16 February. She is pictured with Professor Martin Eimer (far right) and PhD students (right to left) Evelyne Mercure, Dagmara Annaz, Caspar Addyman and Sarah Snoxall. It was awarded to the Centre for Brain Function and Development for 'Neuro-psychological work with the very young: understanding brain function and cognitive development'.

(Paul Mellor Photography)



working on a monograph on the politics of costume and make-up.

“We’ve grown used to the dullness of realism in which actors play people like themselves, and it’s easy to forget how central cross-dressing is to the practice of theatre,” says Dr Monks. “Theatre’s attraction to the dangerous, the fantastical, is perfectly expressed through the act of crossing. What is more fabulously theatrical than Garbo in a tuxedo, and indeed, more dangerous than J Edgar Hoover in a basque and fishnets?”

“Cross-dressing harnesses what is already an intrinsic part of theatre – the conspiracy of imagination between audience and performer,” she continues. “It celebrates the ability to see what is not there. Cross-dressing is perfectly suited to the vagaries of the theatrical imagination, and clothing and make-up become magic talismans in the evocative and provocative exchanges between actor and audience.”

Dr Monks adds: “We are structuring courses around theatre trips (which students schedule) and visits from guest speakers. Our location in central London means we can really engage with the cutting edge and the historical simultaneously: it’s an amazing opportunity.”

The programme (BA Theatre Studies and English, and BA Theatre Studies and Humanities) will be of interest to those who work in the profession as performers, directors, designers and administrators, as well as to people who wish to move into another career, such as teaching or media work. The modules will also interest those who want a University of London degree and are interested in the arts and theatre. The course is run by the School of English and Humanities, where the teaching is rated as excellent and its research has been awarded the top grade of 5-star.

Class act

Birkbeck launches only part-time theatre studies degree in central London

Birkbeck is offering theatre fans the unique opportunity to study BA Theatre Studies combined with English or Humanities part-time in the evenings in central London.

The BA introduces students to the concepts that form the basis of theatre practice, and explores a diverse range of theatre histories, practices, companies and contexts, with a focus on contemporary theatre in London.

“This is an amazing time to study in London, when theatre has become more vibrant than ever,” says Dr Aoife Monks, programme director. “Verbatim theatre, such as *Bloody Sunday* at the Tricycle Theatre; site specific theatre,

such as Shunt’s *Tropicana* at London Bridge station; and the Globe’s new artistic directorship are all changing the theatrical landscape of the city.”

BA Theatre Studies is aimed at people who are passionate about theatre and live performance and want to know more. Topics of study include the West End, the ethics of directing, censorship and anti-theatricality, political theatre, histories and theories of the audience and cross-dressing in performance – Dr Monks’ area of research expertise. In particular, her work focuses on the use of cross-dressing in the plays of female theatre directors and she is

Above: Sir Ian McKellen as Widow Twankey in the London Old Vic’s production of *Aladdin* (Manuel Harlan). For more details, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/eh

The right path

Arts management master's degree adapts to the changing needs of the creative sector



First woman receives Spinoza Lens

Donna Dickenson, Professor of Medical Ethics and Humanities, has become the first female academic to win the international Spinoza Lens award. A frequent high-profile commentator on ethics, she has had direct influence on public education and health policy.

The Spinoza prizes are well known in the scientific community, with the Spinoza Lens awarded in recognition of commitment to furthering public debate. It is named after the Dutch philosopher, Baruch de Spinoza, a strong supporter of tolerance.

Professor Dickenson, Executive Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, says: "It was the most affirming event of my academic career. I am very deeply honoured to become the first female recipient."

The award jury stated: "Time and again, Dickenson strives to express the diversity of human values. Her criticism of universal notions ... is no reason to abandon them. On the contrary, by assigning them other meanings, she aims to give existing discourses a different turn."

Left: Professor Donna Dickenson (Geoff Wilson)
Below: Godfrey Brandt, director of the expanding MA Arts Management programme

Birkbeck is expanding its MA in Arts Management programme in autumn 2006 to provide new specialist pathways in curating, arts education, arts marketing and cultural policy. The highly respected MA continues to provide students with a firm foundation in arts policy and arts management, as well as offering new modules, such as Writing for Curators, Arts Education in Action, Managing the Digital Arts and Arts Management and Urban Renewal.

"Arts management is a rapidly growing and changing field," says Godfrey Brandt, programme director, who is expanding the MA with Cameron Cartiere. "The cultural industries are booming and new arts managers need both

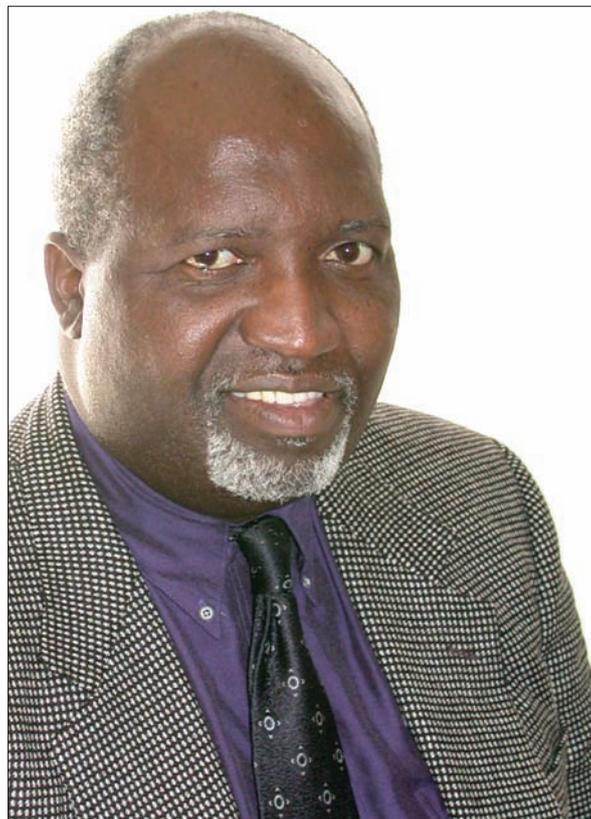
general and specialist skills to meet the far reaching challenges of arts education, urban renewal, exhibition development and community engagement."

The master's degree, which can be studied part-time or full-time, allows students to combine theory and practice through a combination of hands-on projects, essays, site visits and work placements in arts organisations. There is also the opportunity for postgraduate doctoral research.

A full range of arts management courses from access level to continuing professional development are also available, including a new Foundation Degree in Arts and Cultural Industries Management. This new type of undergraduate degree is designed to equip students with the practical skills demanded by the sector, along with the academic knowledge to continue onto the final years of the honours degree if desired.

The two and a half year programme features compulsory modules on Living London: Arts, Culture and Social Policy, and Lifelong Learning and Professional Development Planning: Learning for Life, Work and Study.

The creative sector is the third biggest London employer, behind tourism and the City, with a good reputation for creating new jobs.



For details, call 020 7631 6691, email artsmanagement@fce.bbk.ac.uk or visit www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/artsmanage

Arts Management Summer School: A summer school on Contemporary Exhibition Creation takes place between Monday 10-Friday 14 July, see inside back cover for details



character; and as a singing actor, this is no less the case.

On the eve of the first show, a sense of excitement is a component of any live performance: however, I can honestly say that singing from one of Verdi's great works was simultaneously thrilling and terrifying. What if I fall off my podium? What if my knees buckle under the pressure? What if I open my mouth and nothing comes out? All these questions racing through one's head just prior to the raising of the curtain, and then – the first note, and the search deep inside one's core to give of oneself to the music and the expectant audience.

The Diploma in Performance Studies: Opera at Birkbeck is unique in the UK, and the performances at the Cochrane are the culmination of

The smell of the greasepaint, the roar of the crowd

Grainne Gillis – a student of the Diploma in Performance Studies: Opera – on playing the Egyptian Princess in *Aida* for Birkbeck's *From Britten to Verdi* showcase

Nothing can quite prepare you for that first moment when you step into a theatre and onto a stage as a performer. As a professional actress, I have walked out hundreds of times onto dozens of different stages, and that first step, with its subsequent adrenaline rush, is now almost like an immediate reflex action which prepares one for the ensuing rehearsals and performances. The moment I stepped into the auditorium of the Cochrane Theatre for the first rehearsal of *From Britten to Verdi* it felt right. And so it should have.

To say that our preparation for the showcase was thorough is the understatement of the century. Our indefatigable course director, Liz Rowe, had left no stone unturned in her mission to prepare us for the realities of operatic performance. An

accomplished and experienced répétiteur, she continually inspired each and every one of us to never settle for anything less than our own personal best – and that changed and grew every time we had to stand up and perform.

Our operatic training was composed of several different elements, each vital to performance. From professionals with years of experience, we had sessions in movement, acting and languages. Presiding over the performance were Liz and opera director, Stuart Barker.

The collaboration between our course and the graduating design students at Central St Martins College of Art and Design was integral to our performances, beyond the months of intensive and exhaustive preparation. As an actor, costume is often the key ingredient in inhabiting a

this unique status. Opera is the only art form which comprises all the major performance practices: acting, music and movement. At the beginning of the course we were 20 students with varying degrees of experience and ambitions. However, for three nights only from 11-13 May, we all stepped beyond ourselves to experience a different realm of being; and, whatever our post-Birkbeck experience, all of us now have known what it truly means to transform.

The Performance Studies programme, in the Faculty of Continuing Education, comprises a suite of part-time courses designed to develop key performance skills, expand knowledge and encourage clarity in expression in a range of areas: currently dance, opera or acting. For details, call 020 7631 6640 or visit www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/ps

Above: Birkbeck performers on stage at the Cochrane Theatre (Jerry Mason)

Shining bright

Research success and outreach projects keep the College in the spotlight, writes the Master of Birkbeck, Professor David Latchman

In this issue I'm delighted to report a number of research successes. Firstly, we topped a new league table which records the success rate of each university in its applications for research funding to the government-supported Research Councils (page 3). It is, of course, immensely impressive that our score exceeds that of any other higher education institution.

The strength of our research across a number of different areas was also demonstrated in the results of our application for externally funded Research Council Academic Fellowships. This scheme aims to pump prime academic careers by providing five-year Fellowships. In the first round of this highly competitive scheme, we obtained a single Fellowship for our School of English and Humanities. This time, we achieved

Below: Birkbeck continues to achieve impressive results across a number of research areas (Birkbeck Photo Unit)

four Fellowships across the whole breadth of the College, with the School of English once again successful and Fellowships also going to the Schools of Earth Sciences, History and Psychology.

Alongside these successes, I want to congratulate Professor Helen Saibil (Crystallography) on becoming a Fellow of the Royal Society (page 3). This is an enormous distinction and a highly appropriate recognition of Helen's research excellence.

Of course, Birkbeck is unique in combining research excellence with an agenda of outreach and widening participation normally only found in the new universities that do not have a culture of intensive research. This unique combination has been recognised by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE),

which invited Birkbeck to prepare an application to lead a Lifelong Learning Network (LLN). This would bring together research-intensive institutions, such as UCL and King's College, with institutions with a widening participation agenda.

The aim would be to smooth progression routes among London institutions in the network, enabling students to move easily from further to higher education, between different universities, and from part-time to full-time or vice-versa, as their needs developed.

Led by Professor John Annette, this Linking London LLN has become a reality with the award of £3.7 million from HEFCE to establish progression routes.

At the same meeting, Birkbeck was also awarded £5 million to develop our new Birkbeck East project (page 1). This continues the Birkbeck tradition of bringing higher education to those who are in greatest need of it. In response to a detailed business plan, HEFCE gave Birkbeck almost £1 million to begin immediately on outreach in east London to recruit students who would not otherwise enter university but who could be attracted by part-time study. Initially these students would be taught in leased accommodation, but it is our ultimate aim to open a purpose-built facility in the Stratford area, and HEFCE has provided £4 million towards this.

It is vital that we continue to demonstrate we are serious about our mission. This is particularly true as we continue our campaign for proper resourcing of the part-time sector to parallel increased resources for the full-time sector from deferred top-up fees.





GREEN SQUARE

The redesign of Torrington Square was celebrated on 15 May. Unveiling a commemorative plaque, Sir Graeme Davies, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, thanked Birkbeck and the other colleges which had contributed to the project, the Institute of Education; the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; the School of Oriental and African Studies; Royal Holloway and University College.

Professor David Latchman, the Master of Birkbeck, thanked Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas – who was chair of the Governors at the start of the project – the University of London, as well as the building designers, Nick Evans Architects, the landscape designers, Elizabeth Banks Associates, and the contractor, Calabastas, for what he called “a magnificent development”. The event closed with Lord Marshall, Chair of Governors, planting a tree plaque in memory of Birkbeck student, Benedetta Ciaccia, who died in the 7 July bombings.

Researcher wins award at House of Commons

Dr Carolyn Moores awarded De Montfort Medal at the eighth National Science Week

Dr Carolyn Moores is this year's winner of the prestigious De Montfort Medal for excellence in science communication.

Dr Moores, based at the School of Crystallography, competed with her peers at the House of Commons in a research presentation competition. The event on 13 March formed part of National Science Week for Britain's top younger scientists, engineers and technologists.

Dr Moores, a BBSRC David Phillips Fellow, says: “I was surprised and delighted to receive this award. I learnt a lot from other presenters, so I am sure the judges' decision was difficult.”

Describing her work, Dr Moores adds: “The human brain is built from billions of specialised cells

called neurons. During brain development, they undertake an amazing journey so they can make the correct connections. Various molecules are needed to help neurons find their way. In particular, components of the cytoskeleton – the skeleton of cells – are involved. Mutations in the doublecortin gene severely affect this migration and cause lissencephaly in humans, resulting in mental retardation and epilepsy. Therefore, doublecortin, a component of the microtubule cytoskeleton, is essential but its exact function is unclear.”

To understand its function better, Dr Moores and her team have used a number of experimental approaches that include biochemistry and electron

microscopy. “Using electron microscopy, we are able to calculate a molecular map of doublecortin bound to microtubules and this helps us to understand how they work together. Our results help to explain why doublecortin is an essential molecule during brain development.”

She continues: “I'm lucky to be part of a great team of scientists working in this field of research and we all rely on and learn from each other. It is exciting for our work to be recognised and I am proud to be able to raise the profile of research at Birkbeck.

“It is important to take every opportunity to talk about what we do and why we do it to a non-scientific audience.”

For information about research at Birkbeck, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/about/worldclass

Fundraising financial boost

A quarter of a million is awarded to Birkbeck to expand development initiatives

Birkbeck has been successful in securing nearly £250,000 to expand the work of its development team.

The money was made available by Universities UK (UUK), a lobbying group for the sector, to support universities in their capacity to fundraise more professionally and effectively. Eighty-four institutions bid for the money, only 27 were successful.

The Head of Development and Alumni, Anna Murphy, will now be able to build her team and increase its ability to support the College. The money will be payable over a three-year period and one of the conditions of the grant is that the College itself increases investment in its development staff and activity.

Birkbeck went through a two-stage process to secure this funding, submitting a three-year strategic statement for development, as well as a detailed budget and statements of support from the Master, the Governors and the Finance Committee.

"The College was a strong contender for UUK funding for many reasons," says Anna. "Development is supported at the very highest levels, with the Master having close involvement with the work of the team. Secondly, students in the part-time sector are under-funded in comparison to their full-time counterparts and therefore need more support from Birkbeck. In addition, the recently announced Birkbeck East project is unique and innovative, and could benefit significantly from increased fundraising capacity in the College."

Birkbeck will use the grant and the College's increased investment in development to employ four new



staff members and to improve the programme of development activity.

"The UUK funds will enable us to identify more potential high-value donors, whether they are individuals or trusts and corporate sponsors," Anna continues. "It will also allow us to increase the number of former students supporting the Alumni Fund."

Anna says the development and alumni industry is currently undergoing huge growth throughout the UK.

"An effective development and alumni office can make an invaluable contribution to any university. It can ensure that alumni remain engaged with the College and provide mechanisms for them to support it – whether financially or by using their influence to promote the College in the media or politically. The office can find funds for projects which are not supported by statutory income, and generate funds to ensure that the College can support students from a wide range of social and financial backgrounds."

Above: Anna Murphy, Birkbeck's Head of Development and Alumni (Christina Panagi)

For details about the Development and Alumni Office, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/alumni

Thumbs up for part-timers

Employers in London are more in favour of part-time study for their workers than has been previously thought, says London Higher, an umbrella group of universities that promotes higher education.

London Higher's research report, 'Attitudes to part-time study – the perspective of London employers', reveals that 90% of employers surveyed believe that undertaking part-time study has a positive effect on their employees. Bosses also reported that 90% of employees who undertake part-time study complete their course.

The report states that the majority of firms in London provide often generous funding to support their staff who take the part-time route. However, while employers are willing to fund job-specific, management, IT and health and safety courses, they are less likely to finance language and well-being courses.

Although most firms allow employees time off for part-time study, nearly a third of bosses suggest that government subsidies would make them more willing to encourage this mode of study.

Some 88% of employers who have tried finding part-time courses for their employees are successful, but the report also shows that employers' policies are informal and often formulated on an ad hoc basis, if policies exist at all.

A telephone survey was conducted of 385 employers in Greater London. For employers interested in finding out more about Birkbeck, visit www.business.bbk.ac.uk



Birkbeck campaign wins international marketing award

Birkbeck won a coveted Heist award for the 'Birkbeck changed my life' campaign at a gala dinner on 4 April. The international awards are the 'Oscars' of higher education marketing, recognising best practice in the profession.

The Best Press Advertisement Award was given to Birkbeck because the campaign was "honest, genuine and clever, evoking an emotional response in the audience and positioning Birkbeck in the mind of the reader" said the judges. The panel were "impressed with how the institution had illustrated a thorough knowledge of its target audience – busy Londoners who are exposed to multiple marketing propositions on a daily basis".

With an increase in Open Evening attendance of almost 35%, the results speak for themselves.

Tricia King, Director of External Relations, says: The campaign was memorable and bold. We are lucky to have such a talented group of staff in External Relations. This is well deserved recognition from our international peer group."

All hail the Birkbeck taxi

Birkbeck cab revs recruitment campaign up a gear

It is well known that Birkbeck leads the way on the road to lifelong learning in London. Now the College has its very own taxi spreading the word about its specialist part-time higher education on the streets of the capital for three months, ending at the beginning of August.

The Birkbeck taxi is part of a wider marketing campaign involving all the London transport networks, bus, tube and rail.

The Master of Birkbeck, Professor David Latchman, hailed the arrival of the taxi as a "great vehicle to highlight Birkbeck's unparalleled track record of successfully teaching part-time, adult students face-to-face in the evenings."

Birkbeck's Marketing Officer, Jonah Duffin, says: "Advertising Birkbeck on a taxi is a great way of reaching our audience and increasing awareness about what Birkbeck has to offer Londoners. The image of the London taxi has become synonymous with London's urban landscape and fits in with

Birkbeck's mission to educate busy Londoners. Hopefully its presence in the capital will put Birkbeck in the driving seat as London's only specialist provider of flexible, evening higher education and shift student recruitment up a gear in time for September."

The taxi driver, Simon Woods, says: "I'm getting quite a few people asking about Birkbeck, so I give them a receipt with the College's contact details on the back for them to find out more."

For those hoping to spot the Birkbeck taxi, Simon says he spends a lot of time up and down Euston Road and Tottenham Court Road, and often has his break at the Russell Square taxi hut.

Spot the Birkbeck taxi competition: if you see the taxi, tell us who you are and where you saw it by emailing alumni@bbk.ac.uk. If you are able to take a photo of it too, email us and we will publish it on our website. All emails will be entered into a prize draw

Above: The Birkbeck taxi with the Master, Professor David Latchman, in the driving seat, in Torrington Square (Birkbeck Photo Unit)
Below: A poster from the award winning 'Birkbeck changed my life' campaign (JD Moore)



Alumni news

New benefits

The Development and Alumni Office has secured a new range of benefits for Birkbeck Society members. Visit bbk.ac.uk/alumni or call 020 7631 6563 for details.

Book Fri, Sat or Sun night at **The Montague Hotel on the Gardens**, Bloomsbury, for £99 incl VAT. Book two nights for a free bottle of champagne. Call 020 7958 7731 quoting GV Weekend Special.

16% off at UCL gym, **Bloomsbury Fitness**. Email alumni@bbk.ac.uk for a letter to take to the gym.

Birkbeck alumni are members of the **National Car Rental Affinity Scheme**. Call 0870 191 6950 quoting A099704 for UK hire or 020 857 6166 for international.

London Zoo and Whipsnade Wild Animal Park: 20% off for alumni and their families when you book 7 days in advance. Call 020 7449 6235 quoting Birkbeck.

10% off all holidays in **Cox and Kings Travel's** India, Africa, Latin America, Far East, Middle East, Family Explorer and Eastern Europe brochures. Call 0870 225 0322 quoting Birkbeck, or visit www.coxandkings.co.uk

People Tree: 10% off Fair Trade clothing. For a catalogue and to order, call 0845 450 4595 / 020 7739 0660, quoting Birkbeck. Visit www.peopletree.co.uk

50% off at golf courses in the UK and Ireland with **Open Fairways** membership for £89 (normally £120). Quote Birk06. Call 028 9076 9111, visit www.openfairways.com

Cottages4you has 10% off at 15,000 self-catering holidays. Visit www.cottages-4-you.co.uk/birkbeck or call 0870 192 1622, quoting BBK10.



Fry filming

Birkbeck welcomed Stephen Fry to the College on 11 March for his BBC2 series about manic depression.

He was filming a segment about Cordelia Feldman, an MA Creative Writing student who has manic depression, to explore the link between her condition and her creativity. Birkbeck's library staff kindly agreed to open its doors an hour early to accommodate the production team.

Stephen Fry on Manic Depression will be screened on BBC2 in the autumn.

Above: Cordelia Feldman and Stephen Fry take a break from filming (JD Moore)

In praise of scholarships

Following a highly successful career in property development, Naim Dangoor created the Dangoor scholarships. Birkbeck received £50,000 to disburse as 100 awards of £500 to undergraduate students for the 2005/6 year.

The College organised an event on 30 March to thank Naim Dangoor's son, David, for his family's support. Mr Dangoor told the reception he was delighted to see the difference his support is making. "He took the time to speak to each student at the reception, keen to hear about their studies and backgrounds," says Christopher Benjamin, student financial support officer. "It was evident that the scholarship had given them a significant boost. One student described how it had 'taken a great weight' off their shoulders at a time where money worries may have, otherwise, restricted their ability to study."

Zoo's double

Birkbeck College FC marked its 110th birthday by lifting the first piece of silverware for two decades when it beat Pegasus FC 1-0 in the West End London AFA Divisional Cup 05-06 on 2 April.

Originally called Birkbeck Crystal Zoo FC, the Zoo faced more cup final action on 14 May and secured its second trophy of the season by beating AFC Angel.

The team is sponsored by External Relations and is funded by the Students' Union.

For details, visit the website at www.birkbeckcollegefc.co.uk

Great expectations

Dr Holly Furneaux on how she progressed from an MA to a PhD at Birkbeck and never looked back

Having had a totally positive experience of Birkbeck's MA Victorian Studies, I went on to do a PhD entitled 'Homoeroticism in the Novels of Charles Dickens'.

Staying in the School of English and Humanities allowed me to continue to work with Sally Ledger, who was wonderfully supportive. It also meant I could get straight into research in an environment where I was already comfortable, as one of a vibrant community of postgraduates. Although I had been concerned that my thesis would be too much of a solitary activity, I found that the number of postgraduate reading groups and departmental lectures kept any feelings of isolation and loneliness at bay.

The School provided lots of scope and support for supplementing research. Along with a fellow postgraduate, Anne Schwan, I organised a successful international conference on 'Dickens and Sex', for which we had enormous financial and

practical support from the School. This, and the edited collection that developed from the conference, was some of the most rewarding outcomes of my doctoral study.

I was also offered training which helped me to give papers at other events. Most notably, I was selected to represent Birkbeck at the University of California's annual 'Dickens Universe', a week-long retreat in the hilltops of UC Santa Cruz. Sun, sea, sand and Dickens – my personal heaven!

These activities were hugely beneficial when I came to look for an academic job after gaining my PhD. In a notoriously competitive job market, I've found Birkbeck's provision of a wider range of necessary skills, beyond the thesis, invaluable. I particularly enjoyed the pleasures of teaching Birkbeck's unique undergraduates.

I was also able to work as an editorial assistant on the College's new academic web journal *19: Interdisciplinary Study in the Long Nineteenth Century*



(www.19.bbk.ac.uk), under the editorship of Professor Hilary Fraser, who set it up to disseminate the work of the Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies to a wider academic audience.

I am now in a permanent post as a lecturer in Victorian Studies at the University of Leicester, where I am working on a book called *Queer Dickens*. Already Birkbeck and Leicester have joined up for a one-day conference on *Our Mutual Friend*, to be held in London on Saturday 14 October. For details, or to talk about any aspect of postgraduate or post-doctoral life, contact me at hf35@le.ac.uk

Above: Holly Furneaux (Birkbeck Photo Unit). For information about the School of English and Humanities, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/eh



SUPPORTING ROLE

Lord Wolfson of Marylebone (pictured) was honoured with a Birkbeck Fellowship at the graduation day for postgraduates on 29 March. He is Chairman of the Trustees of the Wolfson Foundation – a charitable foundation for the advancement of health, education, the arts and humanities. The Wolfson Foundation has a long history of supporting Birkbeck, including funding towards a project to relocate Birkbeck's Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development (CBCD).

This will further strengthen Birkbeck's leading status in developmental neuroscience.

Also made Fellows at the March ceremonies were art historian Professor Francis Ames-Lewis, and Baroness Sharp of Guildford, Liberal Democrat spokesperson for higher education.

GOLD STANDARD

Julia Goldsworthy MP talks to **BBK** about Charles Kennedy, appearing on reality TV and how Birkbeck helped her rise through the ranks to the Liberal Democrat cabinet team

Whether it's responding to Gordon Brown's budget as Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury or performing gymnastics on national TV wearing a green leotard, Julia Goldsworthy doesn't do things by halves. Sometimes, she successfully achieves both activities on the same day, thanks to a helicopter and good choreography.

The youngest MP in England at 27, Julia was promoted in the recent reshuffle from Treasury adviser to the shadow cabinet to work with Vince Cable, the Lib Dem Shadow Chancellor.

This promotion presented itself after Julia agreed to embark on three months of intensive training for *The Games*, a celebrity reality TV sports programme for charity, in aid of Cornwall Air Ambulance. The Channel Four show culminated in eight days of competition with live shows in mid-March, with Julia going home with the silver

medal, coming second to singer Javine, and raising over £20,000.

Fellow contestants included former *EastEnders* actress Michelle Gayle and singers Bernie Nolan and Javine. The women battled it out for sporting supremacy in hammer throwing, swimming, hurdling, sprinting, archery, cycling, kayaking and floor gymnastics – for which Julia memorably danced to 'I Predict a Riot' by the Kaiser Chiefs.

"No, I didn't ever think I'd be on national television dancing in a green leotard," laughs Julia, MP for Falmouth and Camborne. "I actually had nightmares about it, especially after seeing George Galloway on *Celebrity Big Brother* in a red leotard."

When asked which of the two politicians she thinks came off best, Julia is diplomatic. "Well I suppose I was wearing a leotard because I was doing gymnastics.



“No, I didn’t ever think I’d be on national television dancing in a green leotard.”



It was one of the events I was dreading the most but enjoyed the most.”

Julia’s participation was in doubt after her promotion because the show clashed with the Budget. However, the producers changed the schedule to fit round Julia’s duties and transported her by helicopter to Westminster to respond to the Budget and then back up to Sheffield Ice Arena for the live curling competition.

“I made it clear at the start that if there was a clash, my work would take priority, and that I could be called out if something critical came up – which did in the end, and I got out for the day.”

“I agreed to take part before *Celebrity Big Brother* was on TV, and having seen what happened to George Galloway, I did have reservations. However, I had spoken to MPs who have put on five stone in their first Parliament, so on a personal level I thought an opportunity to get into some good exercise habits was a good thing. Also, it was a great opportunity to

raise money for local charities.”

“I didn’t go in to make a big political statement,” she continues. “If I wanted to make any statement at all it was that politicians aren’t all middle-aged white men, and that sometimes they can have fun. Hopefully I came across as a normal human being. A lot of younger people in my constituency are more aware of who I am and what I’m doing, so that’s a good thing.”

Julia was in the spotlight for another reason earlier in the year when she put her name to a Liberal Democrat statement by Ed Davey MP on 6 January saying that she and 24 other Liberal Democrat MPs would no longer be prepared to serve under the leadership of Charles Kennedy.

“It was a really difficult decision for all of us and nobody took it with any relish,” she says. “It was about the effect that a leadership contest – in which the existing leader was standing as a candidate – would have on the party. I felt very strongly that it would be very

destructive. This made his position untenable, rather than anything else. It was very sad and it wasn’t taken lightly.”

“The first couple of months of this year were pretty eventful,” says Julia, who went on to vote for Menzies Campbell in the leadership election, “but I think morale is pretty high and everyone is enthusiastic.”

The first major challenge in her new role is the Finance Bill, introduced by the government shortly after the Budget to bring its tax proposals into law. Says Julia: “It is hundreds of clauses and pages long and covers every topic from venture capitalism to vehicle excise duty. It’s a steep learning curve trying to understand all those issues and debate through every clause of the legislation.”

“Another big challenge is our spending review, which involves going through each department and deciding how we would do things differently. It’s interesting because you get your fingers in

Previous page and right: Julia Goldsworthy at Portcullis House in central London. (JD Moore)
Above: The MP goes aerial during her participation in Channel 4’s *The Games* (Getty)

lots of pies and it's a good exercise in financial rigor. I'm pretty confident there will be at least £15 billion worth of things that as a party we will want to change, and given what the overall spending envelope of government is, it should be pretty manageable."

She continues: "Unlike the Conservatives, this is not a way of trying to find money for tax cuts. For example, we recognise that crime and disorder is a major issue, but we don't think that spending billions of pounds on identity cards is a way of overcoming that problem. Money would be better spent on policing the streets. It's about spending differently rather than spending more."

When assessing her ability to critique Labour's financial policy, Julia's age often seems to be an issue with the media, even with some fellow politicians, and Julia admits that she has had her fair share of encounters with patronising colleagues in Parliament. "For some MPs it is probably to do with your age, for some it might be because you are a woman, and for others it's just because you are a Liberal Democrat. You have to have a thick skin. If it was a big problem I probably wouldn't be here now."

Julia Goldsworthy was born and brought up in Camborne, where her mother was a teacher. She won a scholarship to Truro School, and went on to read History at Cambridge. She spent a year on an exchange scholarship in Japan, becoming fluent in Japanese and honing her judo skills. Taking a research job for Truro Liberal Democrat MP Matthew Taylor on her return, she enrolled at Birkbeck for a Postgraduate Certificate in Economics, graduating in 2003. During her studies she worked as education adviser, later becoming Treasury adviser, thanks to her Birkbeck course. She stood as a parliamentary candidate in the

Cornwall constituency of Falmouth and Camborne in last year's General Election, coming from third position to win, ousting Labour with a swing of 10.4%.

On why she chose Birkbeck for her Postgraduate Certificate in Economics, Julia says: "I ended up at Birkbeck because I felt it would be a good way of polishing up some skills in economics. It's a really good set-up: because it was part-time in the evenings, I was able to fit it in without having to give up my work. And it was affordable because I could pay as I go, so I worked for the party in the day as an education adviser and boned up on economics in the evening. I really enjoyed it and I think Birkbeck is brilliant."

"My favourite tutor was probably Professor Ron Smith – he has an amazing mind. His statistics course was the first chance to apply practically what we'd been learning. Suddenly it's not just theoretical, it became relevant to issues in my work."

She adds: "Tony Humm was also great. If you didn't understand something he could bring it down a level, and another level, and another. I have GCSE maths but I haven't done anything beyond that, and he brought us up to the standard of someone who has graduated with a full-time degree. To do that in basically two terms is pretty amazing."

Julia says the skills she learnt at Birkbeck helped her rise through the ranks into the shadow cabinet. "Without the Birkbeck course I wouldn't have become Treasury adviser, and without that experience, I probably wouldn't have been in the Treasury team now, or it would certainly have made my role more difficult. I applied what I'd learnt practically in my job straight away, every day, and still now. Now I'm on the Treasury team it is even more important."

“ If I wanted to make any statement at all it was that politicians aren't all middle-aged white men, and that sometimes they can have fun. ”

For more details about economics, visit the School of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics at www.ems.bbk.ac.uk or call 0845 601 0174 for a prospectus



Obituaries

Arnolfo John Caraffi and Jeremy Willoughby, OBE



Left: Arnolfo John Caraffi (painting by Edward Hall, 1980)

Prior to working at Birkbeck, he held the post of Assistant Secretary at King's College.

Arnolfo John Caraffi

Birkbeck was saddened to hear of the death of Mr Arnolfo John Caraffi, aged 93, on 19 February 2006. Mr Caraffi was Secretary and Clerk to the Governors from 1952–1979, on an initial salary of £1650. There were 255 candidates for the post, of whom eight were interviewed. As the legal representative of the College he was responsible to the Master for the central administration and services.

Mr Caraffi, who was honoured with a Fellowship of Birkbeck in 1979, studied at Birkbeck himself and gained a Chemistry degree in 1935. While an undergraduate, and for some time subsequently, he took an active part in the affairs of the Students' Union, of which he was honorary secretary for one year.

From 1940 to 1946 Mr Caraffi

served with the Royal Corps of Signals, and during this time, he was commissioned and posted to India. His rank on demobilisation was Staff Captain.

A Requiem Mass was held in his memory at Sacred Heart Church in Wimbledon on 2 March.

Jeremy Willoughby OBE

Birkbeck regrets to announce the death on 8 June 2006 of Jeremy Willoughby, OBE, Group Compliance and Risk Director at Schroders, who has been a Governor of Birkbeck and a member of the Audit Committee since 2003. The Master, David Latchman, says: "In him Birkbeck not only had an able supporter but also a true friend who was more than willing to give his time."

Open return

Only Birkbeck graduates know exactly what it means to take advantage of Birkbeck's part-time courses while juggling other commitments such as work or family. They also know how daunting this may seem initially.

A number of former students are volunteering their time to talk to Birkbeck's Open Evening visitors to offer advice to those thinking of studying at the College, helping to give an insight into how embarking on a Birkbeck course can change their lives too.

One volunteer, Jenny Davenport, graduated with MSc Organisational Behaviour in 1998. "I decided to take part because I wanted to give something back. I am a strong believer in ongoing learning and in Birkbeck," says Jenny, the director of management consultancy firm People in Business.

Another volunteer, Alette Scales, felt she'd like to take part "because Birkbeck has had such a major impact on my own life". Alette received a History of Art Diploma in 1988, achieved a first in the BA in 1994, and a PhD in 2003.

Julia Goldsworthy MP (page 15), who has a Postgraduate Certificate in Economics, also gave her time to help.

"My Birkbeck course has had a big impact on the kind of work I'm doing. What is amazing is the range of people who study the same course, and how the teaching fits that whole spectrum."

If you would like to volunteer at a Birkbeck Open Evening, call Alumni Relations on 020 7631 0718 or email alumni@bbk.co.uk

Thank you for supporting the Alumni Fund

Birkbeck, University of London is an exempt charity under schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993.



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Justifications of violence

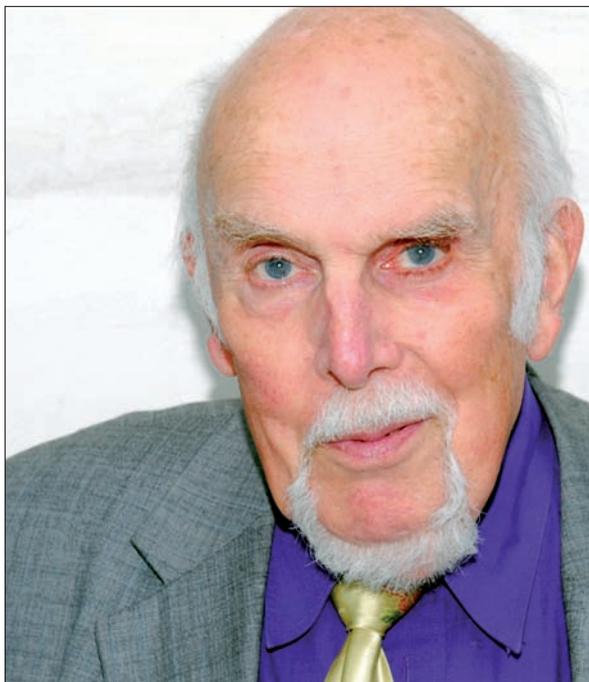
Sir Bernard Crick asks, can terrorism ever be justified ethically?

Our present government seems commendably obsessed with denouncing domestic violence but less fastidious about international violence.

In his book, *Violence for Equality*, Professor Ted Honderich argued persuasively that violent revolt was justifiable not only if the state killed its inhabitants arbitrarily and abruptly, but also when it was killing them slowly by deprivation, malnutrition and gross economic differentiation, as measured by huge differences in life expectancy and perinatal mortality between the rulers and ruled.

Political violence differs from individual self-defence or heroic self-mortification, for it involves widespread human relationships and has widespread causes and consequences; the causes can be many and complicated and the consequences often unexpected.

Are we not all complicit to some degree in the injustices of foreign and social policy that we must have something to do with the motivations of the terrorists of the Twin Towers and the London bombings? Our leaders, defending their failed policies in Israel/Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq, are either fools or hypocrites to deny any connection. To understand is not to forgive. Bush, Blair and the tabloid press accuse those who dare to understand why some Palestinians resort to terrorism as themselves justifying and tolerating terrorism. But toleration does not mean agreement or permissiveness, it means disapproval, but a disapproval limited either for moral reasons – if a clash of values is involved – or for political reasons, in trying to leave lines of



possible compromise open. And, of course, toleration is needed for understanding. As Koestler and Orwell said to each other, “know thy enemy as thy self”.

Terrorists, however, choose methods unlikely to advance or justify their cause except among their sympathisers. But there are plausible justifications of terrorism. When armed resistance is impossible, then true terror is resorted to: the random, the unexpected but recurrent acts of lethal violence intended to create – yes – terror among a population. This terror can make ordinary people feel that their government is impotent or can tempt a government – and some don't need much tempting – into repressive acts and curtailments of customary liberties.

But can such terrorism ever be justified ethically? Three years ago Michael Ignatieff gave the Gifford

Lectures at Edinburgh on 'The Lesser Evil: political ethics in an age of terror'. The doctrine of 'the lesser evil' can, indeed, take us so far: the last resort of the weak against state terrorism or inhuman neglect. But he added that the targeting of civilians could never be justified. 'Civilian immunity' is a good, nice liberal prescription. But the trouble is, any clear distinction between civilians and the state is rarely possible. As Honderich would argue, we are all complicit to some degree in being so law-abiding that we give tacit support, at least, to the very acts of the state that excite and anger the terrorists, in supporting governments who oppress their people towards violent or early death.

Take the invasion of Iraq, or the failure to check the Palestinian policies of the Israeli government. The terrorist knows he won't get far by killing a few officials. Like the Mafia, he creates widespread fear in the civilian population so that we put pressure on the state. Anything for a quiet life.

My objection is not always to terrorism as a tactic of the oppressed in terrible circumstances, but rather to the common failure of terrorists to define their aims clearly enough for political solutions. But by rejecting all their aims out of hand, rather than analysing their writings and utterances carefully – yes, even Bin Laden's – the door can often close against any negotiation. In *On Violence*, Hannah Arendt argued that violence is the breakdown of political action, not its extreme form of political power. Violence too often arises from a failure to pursue political or diplomatic solutions.

For details about Politics at Birkbeck, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/polsoc

This is an edited extract of Sir Bernard Crick's Birkbeck Lunchtime Lecture of 14 June, 'When is Political Violence Justified?' Sir Bernard is Emeritus Professor at Birkbeck, where he co-founded the School of Politics and Sociology

“ In the UK, the image of the Japanese and East Asian communities is, at best, one of invisibility, and at worst, sub-humanity ”

Those ‘crazy’ Japanese

The voyeuristic obsession of the UK media and popular culture with only highlighting the bizarre aspects of the Japanese is a tacit approach that reduces the culture to a freak-show, writes **Dr Darren Aoki**

Image: Asian woman in ethnic clothes listening to headphones (Getty Images)





'Welcome to the World's Oddest Festivals' ran a recent article in the *Independent on Sunday* (28.05.2006, page 8). I didn't need to read further to know that the Japanese would get a mention. Not that the little cartoon of men's bum-cheeks framed by fundoshi loincloths didn't whet my curiosity. Rather, oddness and Japan are synonymous in British media representations of the country. As expected, the Japanese men's hadaka matsuri (naked festival) being described was not only 'odd', it was 'weird', 'doubly [weird]', and 'just plain nuts'.

But what is it about the Japanese and Japanese men especially that so strikes the media and the greater British public as weird?

Orientalism is certainly at play. Accordingly, powerful discursive tactics are called upon that create an objectifying knowledge about the East as 'them', the 'other' that is different from 'us'. The opposition between East and West is a moral strategy to guarantee Western normality since the East is sinister in its difference. Consider Western images of Japanese white-collar men: the sexual perversity for which workaholic salarymen in Tokyo's nightclubs are known and the sexual violence for which their manga comics are famed – both contribute to an imaginary of weirdness that randomly conflates Japanese wartime cruelty with the samurai-warrior past, the 1980s *Endurance* torture-fest game show and eating raw fish.

This Orientalism is also thoroughly gendered with Western and Eastern culture respectively, assuming dominant-masculine and passive-feminine positions. Translated to the level of the individual, Japanese women are paragons of femininity as in the geisha, while men are simply perverted, their 'feminine' cultural identity clashing with their manliness in contradictory spectacles of gender confusion and sexual transgression. Or so Western media representation would have us believe: 'Japanese beats taboo by letting boy act as girl' (Guardian Unlimited 19.05.2006); male gropers on the Tokyo subway (*The Independent on Sunday* 01.01.2006);

male-gay manga cartoons drawn by and for women (*Metro* 11.05.2005); the list goes on.

Nevertheless, at a time when Japanese popular cultural influence is truly global, it is appropriate to reassess, as the MA Japanese Cultural Studies course *Orientalism and Beyond* suggests, whether 'post-1945 representations reflect "the end of the exotic" and an informed view of Japan'. On one hand, media and popular-cultural representation resonates precisely because so many more people now have experience of Japan. Consider, for example, Channel 4's UK-produced interactive TV betting programme *Banzai* (2003). Pastiche Japanese game shows, its hosts included a thickly bespectacled, besuited, unappealing middle-aged salaryman befuddling his 'L's and 'R's – 'prace yo bets now!' was a popular catchphrase in 2003. Without knowledge of Japan and its men, the post-modern irony on which *Banzai* apparently drew would have been little more than racist caricature.

Does it matter that the characters of *Banzai* (two of whom were actually Chinese) were so outrageous that they could only be understood at the level of spoof? Well, yes. In the absence of diverse representation of Japanese in the UK media and Western popular culture on a regular basis, the lopsided power relationships structuring Orientalist discourse, far from being challenged, are invigorated.

The voyeuristic obsession of the UK media and popular culture with only highlighting the bizarre aspects of the Japanese is a tacit approach that reduces the culture to a freak-show. And in the absence in British society of an audible Japanese voice, or East Asian one generally, this obsession can dehumanise, which for diasporic East Asian communities in Britain, has a deleterious effect.

In 2004, Channel 4 aired a controversial series called *Missing Chink*. Dealing with the media representation and, in turn, perception of British-Chinese, its themes are germane to British-East Asians more generally. In one segment examining racial discrimination, members of the

“ In the absence in British society of an audible Japanese voice, or East Asian one generally, this obsession can dehumanise, which for diasporic East Asian communities in Britain, has a deleterious effect ”

Far right: Japanese fans during the match against Belgium in Saitama-Ken at the 2002 World Cup (Getty Images)

Below: A man splashes freezing water on himself during an endurance contest held annually in the coldest season of winter in Tokyo (Reuters)

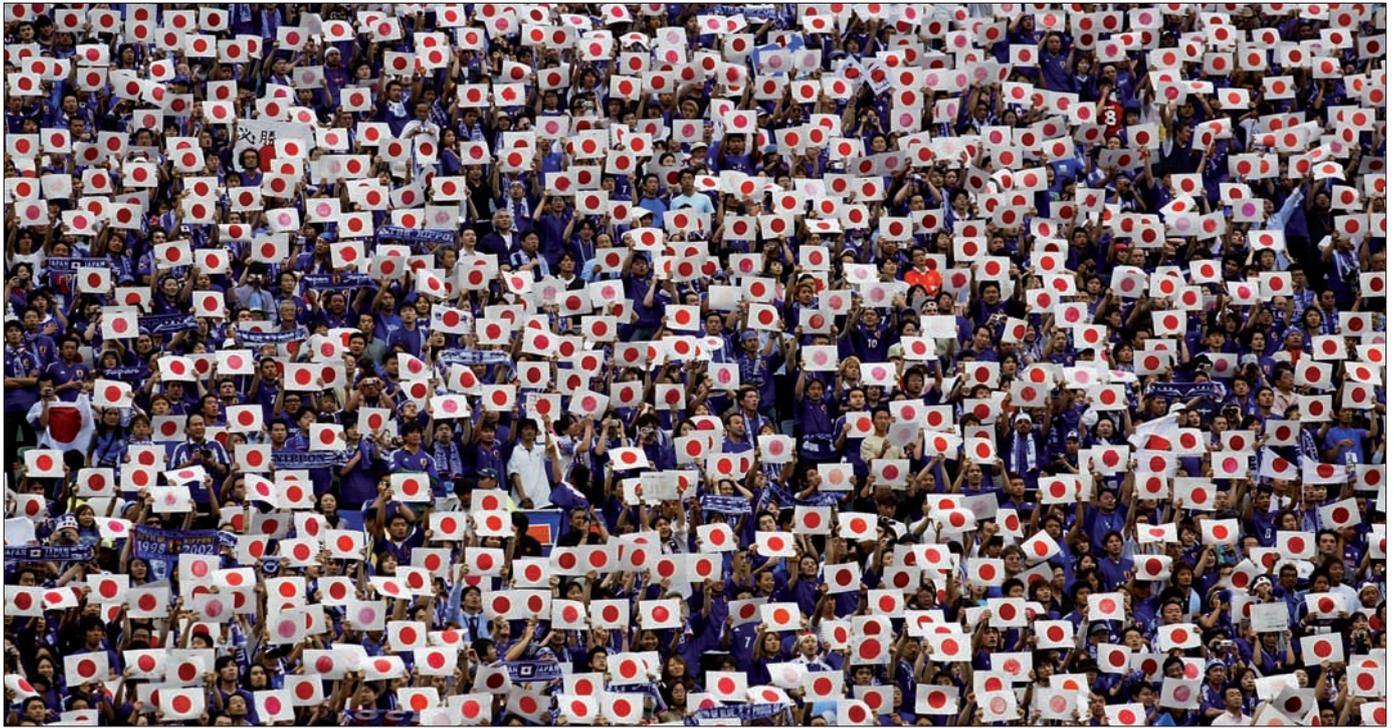


public were requested to impersonate a black person. Everybody refused explaining that doing so was wrong and racist. When asked to imitate a Chinese man, all squinted their eyes, mimicking the language with ‘ching-chong’ nasal sounds. In another segment, the same individuals were asked whether they would ever consider dating a Chinese person of the opposite sex. Whereas men were open to the possibility of an exotic liaison, women all emphatically responded ‘no’.

Of course, this sampling is impressionistic. When considered in the context of Japanese weirdness, however, the destructive logic of Orientalist ‘othering’ becomes clear: ‘Orientals’ do not need to be taken seriously – undifferentiated ethnic ‘othering’; Oriental women are stereotyped as objects of Eastern erotic desire – sexual ‘othering’; and Oriental men are rejected as undesirable and grotesque – ‘neutering’.

Naked festivals and perverted salarymen – what do these tell us about Japan? Not much. They do, perhaps, reveal contradictions in the practice of multi-culturalism. Even as it aspires to equality based on the dignity of the individual, British multi-culturalism nevertheless seems to operate, if the experience of the *Missing Chink* is any indication, according to a masculine-biased gendered hierarchy. A group’s recognition and ranking depends on the extent to which its gender, especially male, images are perceived as normal.

Pity for the Japanese, then. Their – and especially their men’s – weirdness means that the media and entertainment industries are free to abdicate their responsibility to represent all groups in an informed manner that balances the exotic and eccentric with the banal and regular. A cycle of vicious representation is perpetuated. The Japanese in Japan, these former enemies of the original evil axis, remain forever exotic and alien, while in the UK, the image of the Japanese and East Asian communities is, at best, one of invisibility, and at worst, sub-humanity. Still, those ‘weird’ Japanese, they do make for good entertainment. ■



What a Difference a Region Makes

The Japanese Cultural Studies programme at Birkbeck hosted a major two-day international symposium, 'What a Difference a Region Makes: Cultural Studies/Cultural Industries in East Asia' on 17 and 18 March 2006.

Organised with the Pacific-Asian Cultural Studies Forum at Goldsmiths, the symposium introduced cutting-edge research from the dynamic emerging fields of East Asian cultural studies/cultural industries. The event attracted over 130 academics and cultural specialists from East Asia and Europe, and was the first in the UK to address the role of popular culture in the formation of an East Asian regional identity.

The symposium focused on three issues. Firstly, it considered the burgeoning flows of popular/consumer culture criss-crossing the region since the 1990s: Japanese comics in Korea; Korean music in China; and Chinese film throughout East Asia. According to keynote speaker Professor Koichi Iwabuchi (Waseda University), borderless popular cultural consumption may be effecting a twenty-first century sense of spatial/temporal similarity, that is, an East Asian cultural regionality and post-modernity informed

by, but distinct from, the West.

Secondly, the relationship was considered between popular-cultural flows, cultural industries and state policies. Panelists ambivalently pointed to disturbing instances of a violent anti-global 'nationalism-from-below' – Chinese anti-Japan protests and racist anti-Korean comics in Japan. As Dr Song-Hwee Lim (Leeds University) reminded us, transnationalism, far from blurring national identities, is regenerating them.

Finally, the symposium queried how a cultural studies/cultural industries of East Asia may be developed. Is the neo-liberal pragmatism characterising some creative-industries research adequate when the cultural touches upon history and power? Of what value are critical Western traditions? These were questions not easily answered, but all agreed that the regional approach is imperative to understanding a region that increasingly influences the global order. As event co-organiser Dr Nicola Liscutin (Birkbeck) concluded, it is only from the regional perspective that we may understand how nation and culture constitute each other potently and politically to stimulate or wreck enduring peace in East Asia.

Dr Darren Aoki convenes, as part of the MA Japanese Cultural Studies programme, Men and Masculinities in East Asia, the first cross-regional, multi-disciplinary course of its kind in the UK to focus on the emerging area of East Asian masculinities studies. For more information about this and other courses in the MA programme at Birkbeck, including Orientalism and Beyond, call 0207 613 6113, or visit the Japanese Department website at www.bbk.ac.uk/l/c/subjects/japanese

The media, professional and political opinion of the 1970s and 1980s all tended to depict Asian youth predominantly as the object of 'culture clash' or 'intergenerational conflict'. It was argued that a young Asian growing up in Britain is exposed to two cultures, one at home and the other at school, and as a result, experiences stress and identity conflicts. This argument was problematic on several counts.

To posit a notion of two cultures is to suggest that there is only one 'British' and one 'Asian' culture. Yet, as we know, there are some significant differences in the upper, middle and working class cultures of Britain, with each further differentiated according to region and gender. Similarly, 'Asian cultures' are

differentiated according to class, caste, region, religion and gender. Therefore, theoretically at least, there would seem to be as many possibilities of intra-ethnic as of inter-ethnic 'clashes of culture'. To think in terms of a simple bipolar cleavage, then, is untenable.

The caricature invoked by terms such as 'between two cultures' and 'culture clash', which portrayed young Asians as disoriented and atomised individuals, was not supported by the evidence. This is not to deny that some young Asians may indeed experience conflicts, and that some aspects of this dissonance could well be associated with specific cultural practices. The problem arises when this explanation becomes a central paradigm for addressing Asian people's experiences.

Another variation on the theme of 'cultural clash' came into play when uncertainties of lifecycle transitions were explained primarily by attributing them to the effects of 'inter-generational' conflict. The argument was presented along the lines that young Asians growing up in Britain internalise 'Western' values which are at variance with the 'traditional' world view of their parents; and in the process of emulating 'Western' forms of behaviour, youth comes into conflict with the parental generation.

However, inter-generational difference should not be conflated with conflict. The majority of post-war Asian immigrants were themselves quite young and impressionable when they first migrated to this country. They too have been

CULTURE CLASH OR ASIAN COOL?

Avtar Brah MBE on how representations of the Asian community in Britain have changed



“ The image of the veiled woman is seen as the epitome of eastern backwardness and unreason. ”

Left: Dali elephant sculpture silhouette with Westminster skyline beyond (Getty Images)

Professor Brah's published work includes *Cartographies of Diaspora, Contesting Identities; Hybridity and Its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture* (edited with Annie Coombes); *Thinking Identities: Racism, Ethnicity and Culture* and *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalization* (both edited with Mary Hickman and Mairtin Mac an Ghail)

This is an edited extract of Professor Avtar Brah's inaugural lecture of 24 May, 'Travels in Negotiations: Difference, Identity, Politics'. The lecture covered debates in three areas: the figure of the Asian in British cultural formation; feminist contestations; and difference in identity. For a copy of the full transcript, email c.stevens@bbk.ac.uk Avtar Brah MBE is admissions tutor for the MSc Race and Ethnic Relations programme. For details, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/about/programmes

subjected to new influences and are not always oblivious to the cross-pressures which bear upon their children. Indeed, the incidence of 'conflict' may be no higher than amongst white young people and their parents. There is no reason to suppose that cultural encounters will invariably entail conflict. Instead, cultural symbiosis, improvisation and innovation may emerge as a far more probable scenario, as has been the case with South Asian groups.

The media now talks about 'Asian Cool'. Asian cultural innovations are increasingly viewed as Asian *and* British. But back in the 1970s and 1980s there seemed to be an implicit assumption that cultural transmigration was one-way traffic. Centuries of contact and influence between 'Asian' and 'British' cultural forms was rarely acknowledged.

The period since 1990 has been hugely eventful with wars, genocides, traffic in people and political resurrections all over the world. The reconfiguration of the balance of power following the demise of the Cold War, the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, and the two Gulf Wars, have all combined to create a global crisis. As is increasingly acknowledged even by the sceptics, the contemporary world is being reinvented through a new form of imperialism.

The publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* and the subsequent fatwah of 1989 by the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran converted a relatively local British event into a global incident of major proportions. Opponents were represented as backward and uncivilised, in contrast to the supposedly enlightened liberal supporters of Rushdie. This binary became a prime site for mobilising anti-Muslim opinion in Britain and abroad. The figure of the Asian was now fractured in a new way across religious lines creating a postcolonial positioning of Muslim/non-Muslim.

Among Muslims this became the basis of a new consciousness of a pan-national Muslim political identity. There is now the powerful discourse of the 'terrorist' that can pounce on and instantly criminalise a wide variety of 'suspects'. Among these, the young South Asian- or

Middle Eastern-looking young men, especially Muslims, are assumed to be the prime suspects.

The 'them' and 'us' division has been fuelled by circulating racist discourses, including gendered discourses which pathologise the lives of Muslim women. Indeed the figure of the 'veiled woman' is a significant icon that is mobilised by George Bush and his colleagues, as well as by our own Government, which claims to have gone to war in order to free the veiled women. Unveiling the Eastern woman is, of course, a longstanding fantasy of orientalist discourses, but rarely have we seen her made into such an overt centrepiece of trans-national politics. The image of the veiled woman is seen as the epitome of eastern backwardness and unreason.

On a visit to the British forces in Basra, Iraq, Tony Blair described the soldiers as "the new pioneers of soldiering" who were there to deal with the threat of "rogue states and the virus of Islamic extremism" which could reduce the "world system to chaos" (*The Guardian*, 05.01.2004).

Writing in *The Guardian*, Birkbeck's Eric Hobsbawm discusses the dangers of this new imperialism with America at its helm. The British Empire, he says, was probably the only empire that was global in so far as it operated across the planet. But it saw its purpose as championing British interests. The new Empire, on the other hand, sees itself as having a universal purpose, and as Hobsbawm argues, "few things are more dangerous than empires pursuing their own interest in the belief that they are doing humanity a favour" (*The Guardian*, 14.06.2003).

All this has created a 'state of siege' climate amongst South Asian Muslim communities. In contrast to the 1970s and 1980s image of young Asians – especially those with higher education qualifications – as being supposedly more 'westernised' and by implication less 'traditional', the educated young people of today are more likely to be viewed as posing a threat. Asian-British identities are in flux and whatever form these political and cultural identities take, they are closely interwoven into the British social and cultural fabric. ■

NETWORKED SOCIETY

Web-based networks encourage communication but some sociologists argue that we no longer have societies composed of individuals, writes **Richard Giordano**

One way to understand web-based social forms is to look at how we might plan a party. In the first scenario, a manager addresses the staff:

Manager: It's time to plan the annual office party. Our budget this year is £150, about the same as last year, so we'll have the party after work in the office. Williams, you order the food. Adams, you get the drink. I'll take care of the invitations.

In the second scenario, a group of people are sitting around chatting after completing a project at work.

Ben: Hey, let's have a party.

All: Great idea!

Jane: Cool, I'll bring the dip.

Dave: I'll be sure we have enough beer.

Ben: When do you want to do it?

All: Next Saturday night!

Jane: Sadie and Toby are going to the theatre on Saturday night.

All eventually agree on Friday night.

Dave: We need music.

Jane: ...and dancing!

Dave: I have a Mexican neighbour whose boyfriend has a Mariachi band! I'll ask her to invite them.

All: Great idea!

Geoff: I'll ask Rosa where we can get Mexican catering on the cheap.

Alison: I have a large garden – we can all come to my place. But then I'll need to invite the neighbours... (laughs)

What are the differences between the first and second scenarios, aside from all of us probably wanting to be invited to the party with the Mariachi band and the Mexican catering? The first is hierarchical – there's a manager telling the staff what to do; and, it is also structured both in

relationships as well as routines. These constraints produce a boring product. In the second scenario, there's no leader; authority emerges laterally rather than delegated vertically. Participants assume multiple roles and planning is both participative and emergent. The shape of the party, unlike the first one, can't really be predicted. Moreover, the group taps into connections outside the group. That is, these party planners tap into a network. Their product is sure to be fun.

Now imagine that instead of planning a party, you are developing a product. The product can be a new car, a financial service, a new media campaign, a health care policy, or a new course at a university. Let's add to the mix a high degree of uncertainty – information technologies are changing rapidly, customer preferences are unstable, the market isn't fully understood, and there's a lot of competition. Of the two scenarios, which one would you pick to be more responsive? In the first, information and control would travel up and down a decision-making and review chain, while in the second, the group would self-organise and self-adapt to changing contexts using its own resources and acquiring others outside the group as its needs warranted. Rather than working within a social structure where relations are pre-defined and rigid, you instead find a social form that continuously evolves as the contexts warrant.

The benefit of this 'organisational architecture' has not been lost to new industries that exist in what some refer to as 'hyper-competitive' economies, such

Left: Close-up of a bunch of computer cables (Getty Images)

Richard Giordano is a lecturer on the MSc/Postgraduate Diploma in E-business in the School of Management and Organizational Psychology. His current research focuses on social self-organisation in web-based environments with an interest in emergent shared cognition, the co-evolution of social and organisational forms, and both peer-to-peer and group learning.

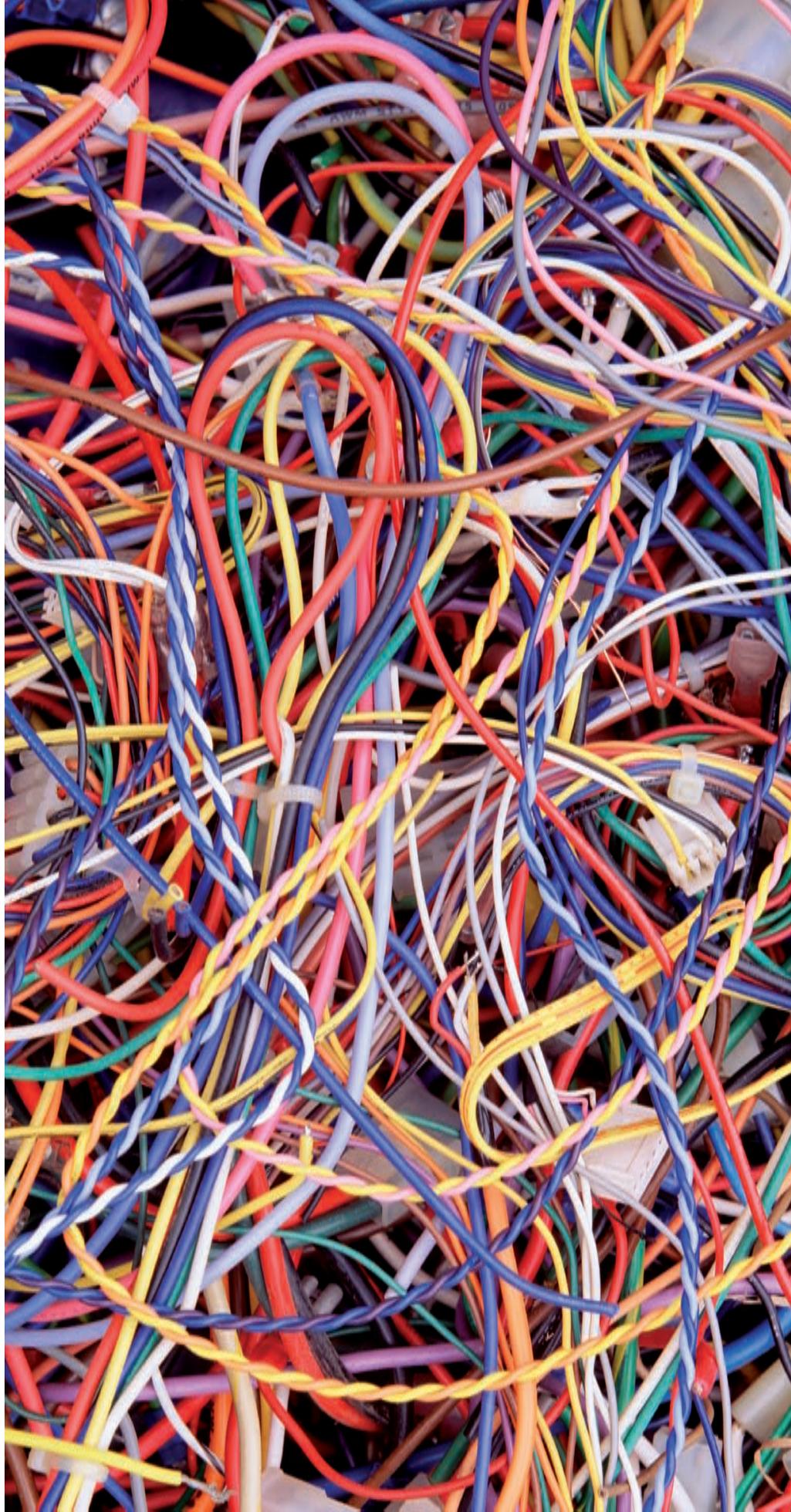
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as arbitrage trading or new media outlets in New York or London. Here, traditional management models with hierarchical reviews, flow charts and quarterly reports are discarded or ignored. The focus is on continuous problem-solving using resources that you already have and can easily acquire through networked communications and co-ordination. The form of responsiveness helps to maintain organisational innovation in the face of uncertainty.

Networks and their study have been around for decades – why all the interest in them now? Human actions don't spread very far if left on their own. What's different now is that we have ubiquitous, easy-to-use, cheap and adaptable web-based networks that encourage adolescents to communicate and collaborate using instant messaging, or complex supply chains, such as Toyota's, to share product knowledge in real-time both within and across organisational boundaries. Some sociologists argue that we no longer have societies composed of individuals. Instead have societies composed of networks of networks. This perspective poses a degree of complexity that is difficult to understand or, in the case of managers, harness.

How do organisations innovate when no single individual has enough information to understand a problem, let alone solve it? How do we understand and exploit emergent social forms within existing organisational structures? What role does the web play in engendering emergent social forms?

The simple answer is that we don't know, although there's a promising way of thinking that might help us find out. In *Web-Based Social Forms*, a module I teach in the Department of Management's postgraduate programme in E-business, we start from the perspective of emergent activity in networked environments, and examine how different groups – adolescents, policy-makers, students, political wonks, engineers, product designers – behave in web-based environments. Our expectation is that future managers will no longer control in the traditional sense, but instead co-ordinate complex adaptive behaviour. ■





“We don’t go around the world and try to take other people’s real estate or their oil. That’s just not what the United States does.”

DONALD RUMSFELD, US SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

What the invasion and occupation of Iraq seems to bear out is that the imperial episode in US foreign policy has failed, pointing to the **Limits of American Empire**, writes **Dr Alejandro Colás**

On the eve of the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld was asked by an Al Jazeera journalist whether he feared his country might become a colonial power in using military force to topple Saddam Hussein’s regime. “We’ve never been a colonial power,” the Defence Secretary replied. “We don’t take our force and go around the world and try to take other people’s real estate or other people’s resources, their oil. That’s just not what the United States does.”

This may well have come as news to those Filipinos, Cubans and native Americans whose forebears, among others, were subjected to US imperialism and colonial expansion. Similarly, at least one piece of extraterritorial ‘real estate’ in the eastern-most tip of Cuba has been pivotal to recent US foreign policy.

But, historical amnesia aside,

“ What the invasion and occupation of Iraq seems to bear out is that the imperial episode in US foreign policy has failed. ”

Rumsfeld's claim does reveal something fundamental about the way the US has projected its power globally since World War II, and indeed why the occupation of Iraq has become a major foreign policy blunder. The American empire that arose after 1945 was one fully adjusted to the emerging reality of a post-colonial world. The USA fought to keep European and Asian empires at bay, and has since then eschewed prolonged military occupations over foreign peoples and territories. It has instead sought to secure global primacy and sustain its international hegemony through the economic imperatives of transnational markets and the political authority of national states, with their accompanying multilateral, inter-state institutions. To combine two catchphrases of American historiography, the USA has generally projected its global power through open doors (capitalist markets) and closed frontiers (sovereign territorial states).

This alone marks the USA out as an historically distinctive empire. Past empires – both ancient and modern – were organised around shifting, indeterminate and non-exclusive frontiers, constantly open to military, economic and environmental fluctuations. Romans, Hapsburgs, Han and Ottomans ruled over diverse populations mainly by extracting tax, tribute, war-booty or exploiting slave labour. Even the 'second' British Empire combined such pre-capitalist forms of rule and exploitation abroad with capitalist industry at home. As a result, these empires were principally concerned with controlling people, not territories – or more accurately, controlling land through people, be these settlers or natives.

The USA on the other hand, has exercised global hegemony by controlling local populations through a command over bounded territories which are clearly and exclusively delimited by borders. This latter task has been undertaken by formally equal sovereign states, not as in the past by conquering armies which deprive colonised populations the rights associated with political independence. Washington's grand strategy over the past six decades has thus been to shore up

political authority internationally for the purposes of generating profitable markets globally – fostering the capacity of allied states to, among other things, guarantee private property rights, create an educated and productive workforce and provide serviceable transport and communications infrastructure. The American empire is one which, uniquely, draws its strength from the proliferation of potentially competing centres of political and economic power.

Such rule through states, rather than over them, is, however, also the empire's weakest link. The USA is an especially vulnerable global hegemon because it relies on the compliance of other powerful states and local social forces in reproducing this global leadership. For all his insistence on America's anti-colonialism, this latter reality was ignored by Rumsfeld and his colleagues in the Bush Administration when they decided to invade and occupy Iraq. It was an oversight which is at the root of America's current fiasco in that part of the world.

Operation Iraq Freedom was of course a military success. Yet the continued fragmentation of Iraq along tribal, sectarian and ethnic lines, coupled with the absence of a monopoly over the means of violence in that territory demonstrates that the US war machine may be able to defeat any military opponent, but finds it much harder to thereafter administer occupied lands and their populations. According to a 2003 RAND Corporation report, current US military commitments in Iraq either fall well below those required of comparable post-Cold war experiments in state-building, or are far too high in comparison to the favoured Japanese experience of postwar reconstruction. If we add to this the severe shortfalls in the number of fully operational Iraqi military and constabulary forces, the picture emerges of a military occupation that exercises control over air, sea, space but not land.

The failure of US imperialism in Iraq is not, however, simply attributable to the number of ground troops. With the exception of the Kurdish representatives, who have for at least a decade ruled over a de facto independent Iraqi Kurdistan,

Left: US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld addresses an audience at NATO headquarters in Brussels (EMPICS)

“ Historical amnesia aside, Rumsfeld’s claim does reveal why the occupation of Iraq has become a major foreign policy blunder.”



Left: The scene of a Baghdad car bomb explosion in front of a hotel in January 2004. The hotel was frequented by many westerners and was where Iraq’s labour minister lived (Getty Images)

by 2003 few of the exiled bodies backing the US invasion had a significant social base inside Iraq. In the absence of such widespread and coherent support for the occupation, and given that US-led reconstruction followed the forceful removal of a regime and not, as in postwar Japan and Germany, the comprehensive defeat of an entire society in war, the occupation has from the outset suffered from a legitimacy crisis. American counter-insurgency operations have been marked by what one sympathetic commander described as the ‘predilection for wide ranging kinetic options (sweep, search and destroy) in preference to the longer term ‘hearts and minds’ work and intelligence-led operations.” Intuitively,” Brigadier General Alwyn-Foster continues, “the use of options other than force came less easily to the US Army than her allies.”

This preference for kinetic options has compounded the ‘reconstruction gap’ caused by a transfer of funds from capacity-building to security-provision. To date, close to half of the US\$29 billion Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund earmarked for schools, hospitals, police-stations and the delivery of basic utilities, remains unspent, chiefly due to insecurity. Rampant fraud and corruption among local and foreign contractors means that even when relief and reconstruction funds are disbursed, there

is no guarantee that they will materialise into much-needed infrastructure. A congressional inspection team led by Stuart W Bowen Jr recently reported how one US contractor awarded US\$186 million to construct 150 health centres had only delivered six of these in three years. Yet it is precisely the absence of hospital beds – and electricity, jobs or potable water – that is fuelling everyday violence in Iraq. Without security, there cannot be reconstruction; but there is no security because of the slow pace of reconstruction.

What the invasion and occupation of Iraq seems to bear out, then, is that the imperial episode in US foreign policy – that is, the unilateral use of American military supremacy to refashion rogue states in the image of the US – has failed. Based as it is on subverting, if not overthrowing the mediating structure of state sovereignty, the occupation of Iraq is a foreign policy decision that undermines the post-war structures of American empire. Paradoxically, the deployment of massive military force under Bush II may prove to have reduced America’s global power, thereby also revealing the connections between the spatial and political limits to American empire. Rumsfeld’s brash claim that ‘we don’t do colonialism’ might now be more accurately rendered as a whimpering ‘we don’t do colonialism very well.’ ■

Dr Alejandro Colás directs the MSc/MRes in International Security and Global Governance and is based at the School of Politics and Sociology. For information about Politics courses, visit www.bbk.ac.uk/polisoc or call 0845 601 0174 for a prospectus.

Dr Colás is editor with Richard Saull of *The War on Terrorism and American ‘Empire’ After the Cold War* (Routledge, 2006) and author of the forthcoming *Empire* title for the Polity Key Concepts series, to be published in December.

Summer 2006

Birkbeck's events, books and news stories

Diary dates

Friday 7 July

Reader's Block

Leah Price, Harvard University, 8pm, refreshments from 7.30pm Graduate Lecture Series, School of English and Humanities.

Venue: Room 101, 30 Russell Sq

Free and open to all research/MA students and staff.

Saturday 8 July

Intermediate English

Language Booster

10.30am-2.30pm, 4 weeks

Venue: Birkbeck

Course fee: £90

An excellent way to return to English language study.

To enrol, call 020 7631 6651

Monday 10 - Friday 14 July

Archaeology Summer Training

Excavation, 9.30am-5pm

Venue: Syon House, Brentford

Course fee: £160

No experience necessary.

Call Natalie Ping on 020 7631

6627, email n.ping@bbk.ac.uk

Monday 10 - Friday 14 July

Arts Management Summer

School: Contemporary

Exhibition Creation

Course fee: £215

Short course guiding students in mounting an exhibition.

To apply, call Sonal Amin

on 020 7631 6691 or email

artsmanagement@fce.bbk.ac.uk

Monday 10 - Friday 21 July

London Theatre:

Plays in Performance

Summer schools from 10.30am-4.30pm, providing an opportunity to study and visit productions.

For details, call 020 7631 6640

or email drama@fce.bbk.ac.uk

Thursday 7 September

Birkbeck Open Evening,

4-7.30pm

Venue: Royal National Hotel,

Bedford Way, London WC1

To register, visit

www.birkbeckmatters.com,

call 0845 601 0174 or email

info@birkbeckmatters.com

New books

Moon Shots: Filming and

Televising the Space Race

Dr Mike Allen

IB Tauris, 2006

Intellectual Property Rights:

Innovation, Governance and

the Institutional Environment

Birgitte Andersen (editor)

Edward Elgar, 2006

The Jew in the Medieval Book:

English Antisemitisms

1350-1500

Dr Anthony Bale

Cambridge University Press, 2006

Theorists of Modernist Poetry (Routledge Critical Thinkers)

Dr Rebecca Beasley

Routledge, 2006

John Dee: Interdisciplinary

Studies in English

Renaissance Thought

Dr Stephen Clucas (co-editor

with Rosalind Davies)

Springer Verlag, 2006

The Reception of English

Puritan Literature in Germany

Dr Peter Damrau

Maney Publishing, 2006

Among the Dead Cities

Professor Anthony Grayling

Bloomsbury, 2006

Giotto and the Arena Chapel:

Art, Architecture, Spectacle

Dr Laura Jacobus

Cambridge University Press, 2006

Tropical Visions in an Age

of Empire

Dr Luciana Martins (co-editor

with Felix Driver)

University of Chicago Press, 2005

The Art of Domestic Life:

Family Portraiture in

Eighteenth-Century England

Dr Kate Retford

Yale University Press, 2006

In the news

Birkbeck East: 'Booster to create new university centre'

Newham Recorder, 24 May

Torrington Square

development: 'New

square unites colleges'

Islington Tribune, 26 May

Dan Plesch: Interview about

the troops in Iraq

BBC Five Live 'Breakfast', 31 May

Jay Belsky: '33% more babies in full-time care'

Daily Telegraph, 5 June

Joanna Bourke: 'Too many for

too long have been getting

away with rape'

The Guardian, 12 June

Ian Crawford: Interview about

life on other planets

The Guardian, 16 June

Prizewinners

Thanks to all those who filled in the *BBK* readers' survey. The prizewinners, each receiving a £10 book token, were:

M Campbell

H Mary Chandler

Valerie Colin-Russ

Professor Robert Edelmann

C E Ghosh

A Loizou-Samouel

Susan O'Reilly

K T Smith

Jerry Snell

Peter Wills

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Birkbeck Society

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- 1823** George Birkbeck founds the Mechanics Institution
- 1920** Birkbeck becomes a college of the University of London
- 2005** Birkbeck voted number 1 for quality of teaching*
- 2006** Birkbeck tops research funding league table and wins Queen's Anniversary Prize for research
- 2007** Birkbeck East brings first-class teaching and education to east London

where tradition matters
where teaching matters
where reputation matters
where ambition matters

Birkbeck — where you matter

London's **ONLY** specialist provider of flexible, evening higher education. Prestigious University of London qualifications. World-class research environment. Ranked number one by students*.

*National Student Survey 2005: for quality of teaching