‘THE DARK LADY OF DNA’
Rosalind Franklin steps into the limelight

TOWARDS OUR THIRD CENTURY
Your ideas wanted

BACK FROM THE DEAD
The cultural rebirth of zombies

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60 One of the many achievements of 2015 was celebrating the College’s centenary (p14–15), with an enticing insight into the history of the college (p44–45).

Building on the past, looking to the future

This year has been a year of continued transition and adaptation for Birkbeck.

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

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

After Photography (3) starring Nicole Kidman as Rosalind Franklin came to the London stage in 2015, we take a look at the legacy of Dr Franklin’s (p47).

Dr Franklin’s legacy. She was based at Birkbeck for the final five years of her life, before her untimely death from cancer at the age of 37. Her life and contribution to humanity and difference in this issue we explore the contemporary resonance of her work in pushing these boundaries for academia today (p44–45).

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

Henry Rummers, Editor
This year saw the College’s largest – ever graduating cohort of 1,600 students step into a new future after studying at Birkbeck.

For many more generations of Londoners the Birkbeck experience of studying here at the College will be taught on a new £1.3m laboratory, which George Birkbeck would not only recognise, but be proud of.

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

This year saw the College’s largest ever graduating cohort of 1,600 students step into a new future after studying at Birkbeck. The unprecedented number of graduates follows our decision a few years ago to increase the provision of three-year evening degrees, we have expanded this provision threefold to enable people from non-traditional backgrounds to come and study here.

This year marks the beginning of an exciting new project, Building Bridges to Birkbeck, delivered in partnership with the London Borough of Haringey (see pp). Together, we are reaching out to disadvantaged communities in the borough through a series of accessible and engaging workshops, lectures and introductory sessions. Building bridges to Birkbeck offers Haringey residents the opportunity to take our Higher Education Introductory Studies (HEIS) programme, and from there to transition onto degree-level programmes at the College. We believe that this model, widening participation in university education, could be applied throughout the London boroughs.

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

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

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

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

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

The number of students studying part-time nationally has halved since 2010–2011, a considerable loss, personally, financially and culturally, to prospective students across the country who have not had the chance to upskill or reskill into a new career. But it is also a loss to the UK as a whole: part-time study is a key opportunity to upskill the workforce and to impact positively on our economy and international competitiveness.

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

This year, we have advocated consistently for part-time learning, including responding to a request for policy proposals from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and briefing Members of Parliament. We have advocated, too, that businesses should be able to use the proposed Apprenticeships Levy to fund part-time university study by their employees. As the Government’s policy on higher education develops in the years ahead, we will, as we have always done, remain dynamic in safeguarding the unique model of work and study that Birkbeck offers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The HEIS course provides an opportunity to explore a specific subject, such as business, prior to choosing what to study. This is designed to be a gradual introduction to university-level study, helping prospective undergraduate students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that they will need to perform well in higher education. The curriculum on offer in Tottenham will initially be linked to business — in line with the initiative’s aim to improve career prospects, transferable skills and entrepreneurship in the borough — before broadening out to other subjects. Students will have access to Birkbeck’s professional network, giving them the opportunity to learn about starting their own business or social enterprise. They will also have support from the College’s current students and alumni, who can provide professional expertise and advice in order to help them succeed.

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

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

For more information, visit birk.ac.uk/prospective/outreach

I would say to people that are thinking that higher education is not for them that they really need to rethink. There’s no harm in bettering yourself — you will do everything just that little bit better; you’ll manage your life better, you’ll have opportunities equal to the best in London, and that a university of Birkbeck’s calibre wants to open here is a vote of confidence in our borough’s reputation for rewarding aspiration.”

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

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

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

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

Offering advice to prospective students, Eduardo added: “I would say to people that are thinking that higher education is not for them that they really need to rethink. There’s no harm in bettering yourself — you will do everything just that little bit better; you’ll manage your life better, you’ll have opportunities equal to the best in London, and that a university of Birkbeck’s calibre wants to open here is a vote of confidence in our borough’s reputation for rewarding aspiration.”

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

When it was time to pursue her long-standing dream of starting her own business, Fiona Button knew that Birkbeck would give her the scientific knowledge and the business skills to make it a reality. "I did the Master’s degree [in Educational Neuroscience] because I wanted a solid, academic, evidence-based approach to underpin my business. The opportunity to develop my skills through doing a dissertation – I’m researching children’s spelling strategies – will be invaluable. I also wanted to tap into the institutional support I’d heard Birkbeck offers entrepreneurs," said Fiona.

After her first degree, Fiona worked in marketing for several years, starting out on the prestigious WPP Fellowship, which gave her experience of working across a range of digital and advertising agencies. Fiona specialised in copywriting, which led to teaching business writing, and then to teaching literacy to adults. It was from here that the idea for her business – developing better teaching resources for literacy – was born.

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

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

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

Tailored advice
Tomasz Smyk, 35, another student who has benefited from the programme, having started his business Get a Free Quotation Ltd – designed to make it easier for people working in the construction sector to source quotes for building work – while studying a part-time MSc in Construction Management at Birkbeck. "I attended an enterprise bootcamp organised by Birkbeck which enabled me to start my business," recalled Tomasz. "The guys leading the bootcamp were young and enthusiastic and what they said about starting a business was inspirational. They divided the whole process of starting a business into a step-by-step process and I have taken many of their ideas on board when starting my own journey."

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

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

More information about Fiona’s business can be found at getafreequotation.com and about Tomasz’s at getafreequotation.co.uk. For more information on the Enterprise Pathways programme at Birkbeck or to see how you could get involved, contact Gary Brannan on g.brannan@bbk.ac.uk or 020 7631 6484.
Birkbeck’s Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences has increased its footprint in the College’s main Malet Street building with the addition of a new petrology laboratory, the first such lab in the UK.

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

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

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

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

Sir Eric Thomas, Birkbeck Fellow

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

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

In 2013, Sir Eric was appointed the Government’s UK International Education Champion and co-chairs the new International Education Council alongside the Universities and Science Minister. Sir Eric spoke to RAE about what it means to him to have become a Birkbeck Fellow in November 2015 (see p51) and his views on how best to support part-time learning.

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

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

What inspired you into academia?

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

What measures do you think could address this?

What do you see about universities transforming people and places. how do you see Birkbeck’s role in London?

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

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

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

Thinking about what you say about universities transforming people and places. how do you see Birkbeck’s role in London?

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

**Awards**

The contribution and impact of Birkbeck academics have been recognised by major grants and by national and international academic institutions. A research grant on cities and the Arup Global Research Council, Natural Environment and Development Studies, has been awarded a £110,000 grant. The grant is part of a team that has been awarded a £1.5m in 2010 to set up the Institute at Birkbeck and relocate the Wiener Library on the Birkbeck campus. In its first five years the Pears Institute has gained an international reputation for its innovative approach to the study of antisemitism and to exploring its connections with other forms of racism and intolerance. It has also become an important bridge between academic research and public policy, taking an inclusive approach to working with academic and non-academic partners. The new funding will help to extend the Institute’s teaching and will continue its successful Early Career Fellowship scheme.

Dr Diane Horn, Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies, is part of a team that has been awarded a £100,000 research grant on cities and sea-level rise by the Natural Environment Research Council and the Aesp-Global Research Challenge. The research will bring together current work on flood risk to help advise cities such as Hull and Bristol in the UK, and Norfolk in Virginia, USA, which are all threatened by rising sea levels.

A Leverhulme Trust research grant has been awarded to Professor Ian Crawford, Head of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and colleagues to fund research into what the Moon’s geology may tell us about the history of the Milky Way Galaxy, potentially laying the foundations for a major new scientific field at the boundary of astronomy and planetary science. The Leverhulme Trust also awarded research fellowships to support work by five academics in the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy: Dr Sue Brooks and Dr Kate Mackean, Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies; Professor Catharine Edwards and Dr Sarah Howard in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology; and Professor Sasha Reshetov in the Department of Psychosocial Studies. Dr Zoe Opacic, Department of the History of Art, also received a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship for her work on architecture and spectacle in the late medieval city. Dr Becky Brittain, Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies, has been awarded a facilities grant by the Natural Environment Research Council to enable her and a team of collaborators to trial techniques that would enable accurate radiocarbon dating of macrofossil seeds from 25,000 to 50,000 years ago — the period when Neanderthals were being replaced by modern humans within Europe. Accurately dating seeds from this age will add to archaeologists’ understanding of the environmental background in which modern humans were developing.

**Recognitions**

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

Fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences has been conferred on Professor Stephen Frosh and Professor Sasha Roseneul, both Department of Psychosocial Studies. Professor Frosh was recognised for his pioneering work in the field of psychosocial studies, working across disciplines including sociology, gender studies, race and ethnicity studies, psychology and psychotherapy. Professor Roseneul was recognised for her widely influential work on gender and sexuality and the sociologies of social movements. Fellowships were also conferred on Professor Emeritus Salmon, Department of Biological Sciences, by the British Biophysical Society and the Royal Microscopical Society; and Dr Caroline Kamara, Department of Organizational Psychology, who has been admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine for her research into occupational preparedness in medicine.

The prestigious Spearman Medal, the oldest award of the British Psychological Society, has been awarded to Dr Iroise Dumontheil, Department of Psychological Sciences, in recognition of her investigation into a region of the brain associated with how we interact with other people, and the thought processes which allow us to control our attention, and plan and achieve our goals. Major academic awards have also gone to Professor Jean-Marc Dewaele, Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication, and Dr Anthony Roberts, Department of Biological Sciences. Professor Dewaele has received the Neuselmann Robert C. Gardner Award for Outstanding Research in Bilingualism from the International Association of Language and Social Psychology. Professor Roberts has been recognised for his work into the structure of motor proteins with an award from the Biochemical Society for outstanding early career scientists. He will give the Early Career Research Award lecture at a 2016 Biochemical Society conference, where he will be presented with the award’s medal.

Professor Sergey White’s book Zappelion Nights: London in the First World War has been named the ‘Spair’ Social History Book of the year for 2014, while the Japanese Association of Sociological Criminology has awarded the Young Criminologist 2014 prize to Dr Mai Sato, Institute for Criminal Policy Research, for her book The Death Penalty in Japan: Will the Public Tolerate Abolition? The innovative use of concrete at University Square Stratford – Birkbeck’s £33m-state-of-the-art campus in Stratford, a collaboration with the University of East London – has won a major award from the Concrete Society. Designed by international architectural practice Make and built by contractor VolkerFitzpatrick in association with JBA architects, the five-storey building scooped the Concrete Society Award in the University Buildings category and won praise for its ‘clean and crisp’ lines.
In 2023, Birkbeck will reach a very special milestone: our 200th anniversary. Professor David Latchman CBE, Master of Birkbeck, calls for your ideas

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

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

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Remarkable things have happened at Birkbeck, such as providing free education to Belgian refugees during the Great War, Birkbeck Babylab is a world-leading centre for the study of the brain function of babies with conditions such as autism and ADHD. In 2015, Martin Paul Eve and Caroline Edwards launched the Open Library of Humanities, which seeks to make scholarly publishing far more accessible and rigorously preserved for the digital future (see p28). The Pears Centre for the study of Antisemitism at Birkbeck is one of just two centres for the digital future (see p28). The Pears Centre for the study of Antisemitism at Birkbeck is one of just two centres for the study of Antisemitism in the UK (see above).

During the Great War, Birkbeck provided free education to Belgian refugees; today we are finding ways to help this century’s refugees. One of the first computers in the UK was developed at Birkbeck by Andrew Booth and today that expertise continues, with the department now using its expertise in Big Data analytics to examine how to maximise the effectiveness of precisely tailoring treatment for Parkinson’s disease patients.

Crystallographer and peace activist TD Banks established our pioneering Biochemical Research Laboratory, where today electronic microscopy is progressing our understanding of diseases ranging from cancer to malaria. One visitor drew a mural in Birkbeck’s famous ‘laboratory’ – it’s the only mural drawn by Pablo Picasso in the UK (see above).

We want to hear from you

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

We are reaching out to you, our friends and supporters, to ask how you would like to see our 200th birthday celebrated. How can we do this in a way that would be recognisable to George Birkbeck, if he were alive today? We want to hear your ideas for how we can mark 2023.

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

We would love to hear your thoughts. Please visit bbk.ac.uk/200ideas, email us your ideas to birkbeck200ideas@bbk.ac.uk or write to us at Birkbeck’s 200th Anniversary, External Relations, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX.

Your ideas will help us to find the brightest, most rewarding ways to enter a new era for Birkbeck, still grounded in George Birkbeck’s rallying cry: ‘Now is the time for the universal benefits of the blessings of knowledge’.
Highlights of Birkbeck’s public lectures, events and conferences – from the history of race relations law in the UK to the serious business of baby laughter

Reimagining the future of higher education

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

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

Find out more about the event at: bbk.ac.uk/re-nurc/Birkbeck-helping-school-leavers-tu-re-imagine-3-year-degree

Arts Week

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

Leading on the eighteenth century but extending far beyond, the packed programme of more than 40 events included: a demonstration of the wonders of the magic lantern by historian and showman Mervyn Heard; an exploration of the twenty-first-century novel by Booker Prize nominated author Deborah Levy; and a quartet of contemporary films from Brazil and Colombia.

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

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

Podcasts and blogs capturing highlights of Arts Week can be accessed at: bbk.ac.uk/about-us/events/arts-week and at: https://soundcloud.com/birkbeck_arts/arts-week-2015

Science Week

The week-long science film and lab tours of this year’s Science Week highlighted the broad range and high quality of work being done within the School of Science. Women in Science Day was marked with talks by Professor Helen Saibil on ‘Protein Machines in the arms race with pathogen’ and by Professor Karen Hudson-Edwards on ‘between man and pathogen’ and by Professor Karen Hudson-Edwards on ‘the history of race relations law in Britain and offered their perspectives on what has been achieved, and what still needs to be done.

Social Sciences Week

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

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

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

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

Law on trial

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

Staff at the School – recognised internationally as authorities in their field – discussed a different legal theme each year, and in 2015 fittingly chose to examine the Magna Carta Universitatum, a document which celebrates university tradition and that encourages bonds among European universities.

Discussions focused on how the Charter’s principles are simultaneously challenged and upheld by law.

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

‘The Islamophobic university’ was also put under scrutiny by a panel of Birkbeck academics, students and activists from across Europe. The panelists considered the ‘Bourdieu/Charlton response to the attack on French magazine Charlie Hebdo as well as the implications of the UK Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on universities to prevent radicalisation by monitoring student activity.

A podcast of Professor Gearey’s lecture can be accessed at: bbk.ac.uk/law/about-us/events/law-on-trial-2015

Memorial lectures

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

• Professor Dame Wendy Hall on the importance of web science and the role of the web in knowledge production and sharing
• Professor Jane Entwistle and Professor Mary Louise on the work of the 2015 victims

• Professor Lynda Gratton, founder of the Hox Spots Movement, on ‘How our work will change – and what it means for us’

• Professor Fiona Bourke in conversation with Lord Billimoria of Chelsea CBE, DC on the role of higher education institutions in developing enterprising students.

Fiftieth anniversary celebration for Applied Linguistics

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

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

In a lively, humorous exchange, Birkbeck’s Professor of Creative Writing Russell Cockbain and novelist Ali Smith discussed her Booker Prize nominated novel, *How to Be Both*, in the fifth Man Booker event at Birkbeck. As David Latchman, the Master of Birkbeck, observed in his opening remarks, the Booker Prize Foundation and Birkbeck have shared a long history and deep commitment to broadening knowledge, bringing the best of contemporary fiction to the widest possible audience, and belying cramped, utilitarian approaches to education. Smith described her dazzling, rambunctious novel as two self-contained but intertwined stories: one follows the travels of an Italian Renaissance fresco painter, Francesco del Cossa, a real-life artist who painted a series of elaborate allegorical frescos in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, northern Italy; the other story tells of George, a bereaved twenty-first-century teenager who is remembering a family trip to Italy. Interestingly, Smith confessed that George’s gender identity was indeterminate when she started working on the novel; it was only later that George became female. Indeed, Smith described the fictional creation of character as a mode of channeling, in which characters arrive fully formed and the task of the novelist is to give them the necessary attention and time to allow their voices to come through. The voice of del Cossa’s stern portrait of St Vincent Ferrer, a Dominican friar and missionary. The painting is real and is indeed hanging in the National Gallery.

Smith also spoke of novelists’ frustration with the form, as it cannot accommodate new ideas. Although Smith’s is formally inventive, her approach is theordoesque, insisting that this has existed does not simply cease because we can no longer see, experience or remember it. Smith also spoke of novelists’ fascination with the form, as it cannot escape the temporal sequence of action and consequence and is incapable of simultaneously representing the simultaneous occurrences of everyday life. To know George’s future, the reader must journey back into the life of del Cossa, although, if you encounter the del Cossa section first, you will know (but not necessarily fully understand) George’s future before you know her past. Like last year’s Man Booker at Birkbeck speaker, Hilary Mantel, Smith has written a historical novel of sorts, although Smith’s is formally inventive and playfully cuts across genres.

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

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

When I was first asked to chair the Man Booker International Prize 2015 a friend asked me was I interested in canon formation? He was sceptical of the whole enterprise. I was too, but it turned out that I am interested in it, and so were my fellow judges: not in establishing a literary canon as such but in realigning the map. Given the extraordinarily varied and compelling writers whom we read and nominated, the judging process raised some issues about fiction in translation and the idea of world literature, particularly in an era when English is master when it comes to use as a world language.

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

The MBI prize, unlike others, compares works in English with works in translation, and though at first this seems a bit awkward and unequal and ill-assorted, I have come to think it’s a fruitful and important way of approaching literature, as it does not quarantine foreign fiction.

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

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

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

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

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

Taken from ‘Translumination or travesty?: The passage into English’, the William Matthews Memorial Lecture delivered by Professor Dame Marina Warner in June 2015
The policy environment for higher education continues to change, with many uncertainties as we look forward. However, our prudent financial management together with the success of our efforts to expand our three-year full-time evening undergraduate programmes have resulted in both a strong financial position and the largest cohort ever graduating from Birkbeck this year.

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

**Development and alumni**
We continue to develop our programme of encouraging our close-knit alumni community to support the College both financially and in kind, developing our mentoring programmes for current students and the breadth of financial support for students at all levels. The generosity of our former students, our friends and our corporate partners manifests itself in a multitude of ways. With over £5m donated to support our students, our research and our buildings in 2014-2015, philanthropic support continues to help us achieve our ambitions. Gifts ranged from £2 to £1.4million and we remain grateful to each and every supporter. Of particular note was our student telephone campaign, in which 46% of alumni contacted made a donation.

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

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

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

**Green agenda**
Birkbeck continues to implement its carbon management plan, while identifying further opportunities for carbon reduction - thereby stretching our reduction target from 10% to 16% so far. A key element of our sustainability efforts is empowering staff through our network of environmental representatives to help improve performance and embed a sustainability culture across the College. Intensifying these efforts will increase Birkbeck’s chances of achieving accreditation to the ISO14001 Environmental Management Standards in the near future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition, the College hosts over 40 research institutes and centres, including the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, the Centre for Iberian and Latin American Visual Studies and the Centre for Innovation Management Research, as well as others – such as the Centre for Neuroimaging or the Centre for Planetary Sciences – that are joint ventures with UCL.

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

In addition, Birkbeck holds a vibrant programme of workshops and conferences, and hosts public lectures, seminars, exhibitions and films. Over the last 12 months, Birkbeck’s Institute for the Humanities and the Institute for Social Research alone held events ranging from examining London’s housing crisis, to memory and the First World War, as well as lectures by Carlo Ginzberg, Slavoj Žižek, Kathleen C Stewart and Jacqueline Rose.

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

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

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

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

**Predicting behavioural problems**

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

Published in June, the research was carried out by Birkbeck and the University of Padua in Italy. It involved studying the visual attention of Italian newborns, and then following up the same children when they were between five and nine years old. The researchers showed that newborns who typically spent longer orienting to each image showed fewer behavioural problems later on in childhood.

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

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

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

**Predicting autism symptoms**

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

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

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

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

“Evidence is now accumulating for early differences in motor and perceptual abilities, which calls for a reassessment of developmental theories of autism,” said Dr Teodora Gliga of Birkbeck’s Babylab, and a principal author of the research.

“We hope this study and others will bring autism research questions closer to the needs of those directly affected.”
New professors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Professor Wood was recently appointed an Associate Editor of *The Computer Journal*. 
In addition to recognising the achievements of our students, Birkbeck also commends members of the College’s teaching community each year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I am very grateful that Birkbeck values my initiatives and it gives me great motivation to continue further in this direction.”
You can’t really move for hordes of the undead these days. The Walking Dead is one of the most successful TV series ever. It now has a spin-off, unimaginatively titled Fear the Walking Dead. On World Zombie Day there are ‘zombie walks’ in more than one hundred cities around the world, thousands choosing to shuffle around in ghastly make-up. You can spice up your morning jog by listening to ‘Zombie Run’, an app that surrounds you with the sound of zombies chasing you down. The teenager in the next room is probably shooting zombies in a computer game right now. We have zombie government, zombie companies, zombie stocks and shares, zombie computers. And I’ve definitely been to zombie committees with zombie professors.

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

As a cultural historian of supernatural beliefs and Gothic literature, I am always interested in the origins of these monsters, how they emerge from the cultural margins and over the centuries steadily march into our mainstream culture and colonise our imaginations. Standard film histories of the zombie tend to start with the low-budget White Zombie, made in 1932. It starred Bela Lugosi as Murder Legendre, in command of a crew of zombie workers in his factory. If he looks a bit like Count Dracula, that’s because Lugosi had just starred in the Universal Studios adaptation of Dracula (one of the films that prompted the ‘H for Horrific’ film classification) and they even used the same sets, hired at night on the cheap.

But this film is regarded merely as a prelude to the true emergence of the modern zombie film, launched by George Romero with Night of the Living Dead film, made completely outside the studio system, hired at night on the cheap. Romero set up intellectualists of New York’s Museum of Modern Art as a genuine work of art. Romero made a cultural statement, spoke to the disordered, revolutionary times, and achieved the feat of being the first film classification) and they even used the same sets, hired at night on the cheap.

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

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

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

In 2013, when I worked at the University of Lincoln, I found this frustrating, since even universities often cannot afford access to everything they need. The project that I co-founded with Dr Caroline Edwards at that time—also now in the English department at Birkbeck–is called the Open Library of Humanities. Now run out of Birkbeck as a world-leading initiative, with contributions from institutions including Harvard, Duke, Carnegie Mellon, Princeton, and Yale, distributing this funding turns out to be highly cost effective at a rate of approximately $3 per institution, per article.

A new model for publishing

With a prestigious grant of £44,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation made to Birkbeck, the Open Library of Humanities works differently. First, we are a not-for-profit UK charity, solely concerned with publishing academic material for the public benefit. There is no profit in our enterprise, which cuts costs. Second, instead of asking individual institutions to pay for their own researchers to publish their work, which is unsustainable for many academic departments, we have solicited contributions so far from 110 universities worldwide that go into a central fund, out of which we cover our costs. Including contributions from institutions including Harvard, Duke, Carnegie Mellon, Princeton, and Yale, distributing this funding turns out to be highly cost effective at a rate of approximately $3 per institution, per article.

By achieving open access in these disciplines with a totally novel economic model, we hope to demonstrate the continuing importance of studying culture and history; the humanities. We do our disciplines a disservice when we fail to fully harness the power of worldwide dissemination provided by the internet. Many people have humanities degrees and would continue to read our work, and it is our mission to make that possible.

Over the next few years, using the Mellon grant, we plan to expand the platform. One of the most important things we can do is to persuade editorial boards that they should move their journals away from for-profit, subscription-based publishers to our online, open and free-to-read platform. This is one of our goals and it is backed by strong political support for open access. We also want to boost the number of contributing institutions to 300 or more as the economies of scale get progressively better. We intend also to build a technological platform that will facilitate interlingual translation of work so that cultural borders need not be determined by national boundaries.

We are only at the beginning of the project; we launched in September 2015 with seven journals. It is vital that the humanities make the transition to full, open, digital dissemination if they are to survive in an increasingly hostile culture, and through the Open Library of Humanities, supported by Birkbeck, we aim to make this a reality.

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

We do our disciplines a disservice when we fail to fully harness the power of worldwide dissemination provided by the internet.
All aboard the pink battle bus?

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

At the outset, the 2015 British General Election campaign appeared to be less concerned with women voters than was the case in 2010, when the ‘Mumsnet election’ newframe played a prominent role. The relative lack of interest in women in 2015 was punctuated by the arrival of Labour’s pink/magenta battle bus that visited marginal constituencies, targeting women voters. But did this reflect a genuine change or just a little light entertainment to liven up a campaign described as dull by many journalists? The 2015 election sits within a context of increased interparty competition for women’s votes that has gradually brought the parties closer together on ‘women’s issues’ such that all, with the possible exception of UKIP, are competing to be viewed as at least equally liberally feminist. In the 1990s, New Labour actively sought to undermine the Conservative party’s post-war electoral advantage among women. Labour enacted legislation designed to further gender equality, and it used all-women shortlists to ensure the better representation of women on the Labour benches in the House of Commons. In 2005, the Conservative party was competing vigorously with Labour for the support of women voters; David Cameron adopted the language of liberal feminism, stressing the need for more Conservative women politicians, and fairer access to paid employment for women. This party competition for women’s votes was noted by media coverage of the 2010 election, at least in the long campaign (the final three months prior to the election), and some claimed that the election would be the ‘Mumsnet election’, although the interest in women voters diminished after the all-male leaders’ debates during the short campaign (the final month prior to the election). In 2014, women voters were also a key target group during the Scottish referendum campaign (women were consistently less likely to support independence than men). As a result of the heightened interest in women voters in both contests one might have expected women voters to be a prominent feature of the parties’ campaigns and of the press coverage of the 2015 election. However, in a 2013 blog for The Guardian, Anne Perkins described 2010 as ‘not so much a new dawn as a high water mark’ for interest in women voters; arguing that with the exception of the ‘hoo - ho around Labour’s pink battle bus... women voters were not a central feature of news coverage during the long campaign. Labour’s bus generated a great deal of publicity, not because the party was targeting women voters per se but due to its colour, which some described as pink and others as magenta. Either way, the colour of the bus generated many column inches that at least touched on the issue of women voters. Harriet Harman and the Labour party were accused of patronising women and of succumbing to the ‘pinkification’ of womanhood. However, the colour of the bus may have been a successful strategy, given that previous Labour party women’s campaign buses (of other hues) seeking out women voters in previous elections had been largely ignored by the media. Returning to the issue of whether 2010 was the high water mark for interest in women voters, a Nexis search of UK national newspapers suggests that there was considerable newspaper copy devoted to the subject in 2015. In fact, during the long campaign in 2015, there were 142 references to women voters in national newspapers compared with 45 references in the same period in 2010. During the short campaign, there were 37 references to women voters in 2015 and 20 in 2010. Thus, at least in terms of newspaper coverage, women voters were arguably given more prominence in 2015 than 2010. In 2015 there was no easily digestible, simple newframe, such as the ‘Mumsnet election’ or ‘Worcester woman’ which provided a journalistic hook for articles discussing women voters, but women voters and women’s issues were raised during the campaign. From a media perspective this may mean that women were less visible but potentially, perhaps, it might also suggest that the issue of women voters was more fully integrated into the coverage as a whole. In her piece, Anne Perkins noted that politicians seemed finally to have realised in 2010 that women make up 52% of voters but that they seemed to have forgotten this by 2015. Alternatively, perhaps, the 2010 realisation may have led to a situation where, in 2015, women voters were perceived as a central feature of election strategy and not simply as another ‘target’ group.

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

This article is based on a longer piece published in the Political Quarterly co-authored with Professor Sarah Childs, University of Bristol.
Global research reveals alarming rise in imprisoned women

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

New data released by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) in the School of Law at Birkbeck have revealed that more than 700,000 women and girls are in prison around the world. The data were published in September 2015 in the third edition of the World Female Imprisonment List, which complements the ICPR’s World Prison Brief database.

The analysis indicates that female prison population levels have grown much faster than male prison population levels since around the year 2000, with the number of women and girls in prison increasing by around 50% in the past 15 years. Among the countries with the highest volume of imprisoned women are the USA (25,401) and China (103,766, plus an unknown number in pre-trial or administrative detention). The next highest totals are in the Russian Federation (44,751), Brazil (53,304), Thailand (37,380), Vietnam (20,553), India (18,188) and Mexico (13,400). Dr Kosco Jacobson, Co-director of the ICPR, said that the World Female Imprisonment List “draws attention to the high and rapidly increasing numbers of women and girls held in penal institutions worldwide. These women and girls make up a small but growing minority of the total world prison population, they are an extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged group, and tend to be victims themselves of crime and abuse. The approximately 50% increase in numbers of imprisoned women and girls over the past 15 years should be of profound concern to governments, prison administrations and all who are committed to justice and penal reform.”

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

Updated by the ICPR on an ongoing basis, the overarching World Prison Brief is a unique and internationally renowned online database on prisons and the use of imprisonment around the world. An invaluable resource to policy makers and researchers across the globe, it provides details on the prison system of over 220 independent countries and dependent territories.

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

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

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

The broader goals of the programme are to:

- promote high-quality public and policy debate, at domestic and global levels, about prisons and the use of imprisonment;
- promote policies and practices which are human rights compliant and support the reintegration of prisoners;
- inform goals and indicators related to human rights and the use of imprisonment;
- enhance the quality and accessibility of comparative data.

For more information on the World Prison Brief, visit: prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief

Coping with cancer: the impact on work or education

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

Many working people who are diagnosed with cancer need to combine work with treatment. Work is beneficial socially and psychologically, but it is important to ensure that working patients with cancer are well prepared about what to expect. They need the right advice about what will happen and ways of coping with the challenges of combining cancer treatment with work life. Patient education can be empowering. Researchers at Birkbeck’s Department of Organisational Psychology, have offered useful insights into this area. Her recent study involved an analysis of data from a Department of Health national survey of nearly 3,500 patients with cancer. Dr Kamau found that providing them with information about the type of cancer they had, its treatment and impact on work life or education can be empowering.

Research by Dr Caroline Kamau, from Birkbeck’s Department of Organisational Psychology, has offered useful insights into this area. Her recent study involved an analysis of data from a Department of Health national survey of nearly 3,500 patients with cancer. Dr Kamau found that providing them with information about the type of cancer they had, its treatment and impact on work life or education can be empowering. Researchers at Birkbeck’s Department of Organisational Psychology, have offered useful insights into this area. Her recent study involved an analysis of data from a Department of Health national survey of nearly 3,500 patients with cancer. Dr Kamau found that providing them with information about the type of cancer they had, its treatment and impact on work life or education can be empowering.

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Forged from ice and fire

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

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

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

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

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

They found a tiny fragment of granite within the larger meteorite, named EET 87720, which was composed of material of a markedly different origin. “It’s likely the meteorite we were looking at would have been thrown up by an impact on another planet or proto-planet as debris, which eventually reached space,” says Dr Beard. “Eventually, these meteorites reach Earth and can provide us with an insight to geological processes outside of what we experience on this planet.”

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

“We found that the meteorite is very quartz heavy – similar, in fact, to granites you might find in Cornwall,” says Dr Beard. “Essentially what we have found is that processes which take place on Earth are not unique – they are the same on other planets as those which have shaped, and continue to shape Earth. It has knock-on implications for other processes which we think are exclusive to Earth, like the formation of life. We may be less unique than we think.”
In an increasingly fast-paced world in which working long hours is a badge of honour and stress is but a text message away, finding quality ‘me-time’ to decompress is a real challenge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Uniting and dividing

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

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

Blood is central to Jewish religion and ritual and has long been used by Jews for their own self-definition. Yet blood has also been used by others to mark Jews' bodies and desires as different. This has often had profoundly negative connotations, as the Jews' uses of blood – both the purification and the desire to procure blood for a Passover ritual. If the religion of the Jews was not essentially linked to the, 'injudicious conduct of the Jews in not handing over the body of the lad when they first discovered it'. Here was a measure of how the blood libel had lost credibility. The Jewish polymath Joseph Jacobs wrote about one notorious case of blood libel: the murder of a boy, Hugh, in Lincoln, which had resulted in the judicial execution of the ten Jews in Damascus, who in March of that year had been arrested, tortured, and sentenced to be hanged for the murder a Capuchin monk, and his servant, might indeed be guilty of the crime. Their alleged motive was the Jews' desire to procure blood for a Passover ritual. If Jews really did believe every word of the Old Testament, Sigma suggested, the charge was all too believable.

The year 1840 was the last time the blood libel received any widespread credence in Britain. Five decades later, the Jewish polymath Joseph Jacobs wrote about one notorious case of blood libel: the murder of a boy, Hugh, in Lincoln, which had resulted in the judicial execution of eighteen Jews in 1255. He attributed some blame to the 'injudicious conduct of the Jews in not handing over the body of the lad when they first discovered it'. Here was a measure of how the blood libel had lost credibility. The Jewish 'victims' innocence stood so far beyond doubt that their errors could now be owned. Jacobs was a race scientist as well as a historian. At the same time as he consigned the blood libel to history, he vaunted the purity of Jewish blood. He collaborated with Francis Galton, Charles Darwin's cousin, who in 1883 coined the term 'eugenics' and was on a quest to trace the influence of heredity on different races and families. Together the two men ventured to the Jews' Free School in Whitechapel to take photographs and, using Galton's technique of composite photography, they aimed to arrive at an image of 'the Jewish type'. In 1885 Jacobs delivered a paper on 'The racial characteristics of modern Jews' to the luminaries of the Anthropological Institute. He argued that Jews were, with minor exceptions, a pure race, united by common descent. Inevitably, as he strived to convey heredity to a broad reading public, he reached for a singularary metaphor. He referred to those who were 'Jews only in blood' and those of 'half Jewish blood'. It is tempting for us to regard the decaying credibility of the blood libel as one symptom of the march of reason, but Jacobs' participation in both the burial of blood libel and the birth of race theory should alert us to the fact that the history of ideas is not simply a history of progress: the Jews were never proven innocent. It was only when the ruling powers in Damascus and Alexandria were defeated in battle that the Jews' accusers fell silent. It was politics and war that shaped knowledge, not the reverse. And the same can be said for the doctrine of race. The doctrine of blood proved too attractive and too protean to be regulated by a handful of Jewish scholars. Jewish and non-Jewish scientists corrected Jacobs: the Jews, they agreed, were an impure race. It was this very mongrel quality that Nazi ideology seized upon. Here too it was war, not science, which ultimately defeated their bloody project.

Blood - Reflections on What Unites and Divides Us, edited by Anthony Bale and David Feldman, has been produced by the Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism to accompany the exhibition Blood: the murder of a boy, Hugh, in Lincoln, which had resulted in the judicial execution of eighteen Jews in 1255. He attributed some blame to the 'injudicious conduct of the Jews in not handing over the body of the lad when they first discovered it'. Here was a measure of how the blood libel had lost credibility. The Jewish 'victims' innocence stood so far beyond doubt that their errors could now be owned. Jacobs was a race scientist as well as a historian. At the same time as he consigned the blood libel to history, he vaunted the purity of Jewish blood. He collaborated with Francis Galton, Charles Darwin's cousin, who in 1883 coined the term 'eugenics' and was on a quest to trace the influence of heredity on different races and families. Together the two men ventured to the Jews' Free School in Whitechapel to take photographs and, using Galton's technique of composite photography, they aimed to arrive at an image of 'the Jewish type'. In 1885 Jacobs delivered a paper on 'The racial characteristics of modern Jews' to the luminaries of the Anthropological Institute. He argued that Jews were, with minor exceptions, a pure race, united by common descent. Inevitably, as he strived to convey heredity to a broad reading public, he reached for a singularary metaphor. He referred to those who were 'Jews only in blood' and those of 'half Jewish blood'. It is tempting for us to regard the decaying credibility of the blood libel as one symptom of the march of reason, but Jacobs' participation in both the burial of blood libel and the birth of race theory should alert us to the fact that the history of ideas is not simply a history of progress: the Jews were never proven innocent. It was only when the ruling powers in Damascus and Alexandria were defeated in battle that the Jews' accusers fell silent. It was politics and war that shaped knowledge, not the reverse. And the same can be said for the doctrine of race. The doctrine of blood proved too attractive and too protean to be regulated by a handful of Jewish scholars. Jewish and non-Jewish scientists corrected Jacobs: the Jews, they agreed, were an impure race. It was this very mongrel quality that Nazi ideology seized upon. Here too it was war, not science, which ultimately defeated their bloody project.

The illustrated publication features specially commissioned essays from leading scholars which reflect on the religious, historical and medical dimensions of blood. You can purchase the book and find out more about the exhibition at the Pears Institute.
Peter Urwin, Biteback

entrenched myths of British political debate. John Ross, Associate Lecturer in Economics, explodes some of the most grounded in hard economic fact. With his each party’s stances on the biggest issues of is responsible for what – especially when chances for years. But it’s rarely clear who can send popularity sky-rocketing, bad the economy. While good economic news though, it all comes down to one thing: eating a bacon sandwich? For the voter, other halves look like? Who looks best when perceptions of politicians. What do their Pollsters are constantly worrying about our economy before the Norman Conquest. the traditional that only ended with the Second World War.

Debby Banham, Lecturer in History, draws on a wide variety of sources to investigate how Anglo-Saxon farmers produced the food and other agricultural products that sustained English society, culture and the economy before the Norman Conquest. The picture that emerges shows an agriculture that changed from an essentially peasant state in the old Roman period to what was recognisably the beginning of prehistoric state in the sub-Roman period. Anglo-Saxon agriculture that changed from an essentially peasant state in the old Roman period to what was recognisably the beginning of the story of pain since the eighteenth century, addressing the big questions about the relationship between law and desire, enjoyment and transgression, freedom and subjection, ethics and atheism. The process of analysis problematises fundamental tenets of the legal system, leading the patient to rethink long-held beliefs; terms such as ‘guilt’ and ‘innocence’, ‘truth’ and ‘lies’ acquire new meanings.

Joanna Bourke, Professor of History, tells the story of pain since the eighteenth century, addressing the big questions about the relationship between law and desire, enjoyment and transgression, freedom and subjection, ethics and atheism. The process of analysis problematises fundamental tenets of the legal system, leading the patient to rethink long-held beliefs; terms such as ‘guilt’ and ‘innocence’, ‘truth’ and ‘lies’ acquire new meanings.

From Prayer to Painkillers
Joanna Bourke, Oxford University Press

The Synoptic Problem and Statistics
Andris Abakuks, CRC Press

Land, Water and Infrastructure
Hélyette Geman, Wiley Finance UK

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

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

The Synoptic Problem and Statistics
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Our students

Noor Din
MSC Advanced Computing Technologies (Data Analytics)

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

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

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

"Of the competition. So that was the start of my journey into Birkbeck.

"When I first came into the open evening, it felt like I could actually fit in.

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

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

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

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

Jane McDonald
LLB (Law)

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

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

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

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

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

Follow Noor Din on Twitter @NoorDinTech

Stella Asante
BA Linguistics and Language (Japanese)

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

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

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

Amina Rahman
MSc Management Consultancy and Organisational Change

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

"The department did everything they could to support, such as giving me extra time in exams.

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

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Brooke Johnson
BSc Geology

"Being at Birkbeck, I really felt like I was turning my life around. Before coming here, the real low point came when I was working in a call centre.

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

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

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

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

Johanna Halffenden
MSc Education, Power and Social Change

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

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For more student profiles, visit: bibl.ac.uk/student-profiles
Joy Manners
Joy Manners was appointed an independent Governor of Birkbeck in 2005 and has made a significant contribution to the College in that time, serving on the Audit Committee since 2006 and becoming Chair of that committee in 2012. Her role as a Governor came to an end in September 2015, and Birkbeck is delighted that she will be continuing her involvement with the College as a Fellow.

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

She said: “Since becoming a Governor at Birkbeck, I have been so impressed by the vision and dedication of the Master and all the staff to ensuring Birkbeck is a leading research institution providing top-class education for all its students, whatever their circumstances. For their part, the focus and commitment of Birkbeck students is truly inspirational. I feel it’s important for alumni to give something back.”

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

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

Daniel’s involvement at Birkbeck dates from when he gained an MA in Renaissance Studies in 2009. He has shown a significant commitment to the College, not only in providing funds for the creation in 2003 of the Peltz Gallery (see also p48), and the Peltz postgraduate scholarships, in the School of Arts, but also by being a member of the Estates Committee, where he advises the governors on property matters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Professor Sir Eric Thomas
Professor Sir Eric Thomas, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol, was appointed the Government’s UK International Education Champion in 2013 and co-chairs the new International Education Council alongside the Universities and Science Minister.

Awarded a Knighthood in the Queen’s Birthday Honours in 2013 for services to higher education, he has been a champion of part-time higher education and of Birkbeck in particular. See p11 for an interview with Sir Eric.

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

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

She said: “I am delighted to be associated with Birkbeck in this way. I greatly admire the work of the College and the leadership of the Master. The way in which Birkbeck offers opportunities to people across a vast array of subjects is inspiring. The Wolfson Foundation has been very happy to have been able to provide support.”
The life of Birkbeck scientist Rosalind Franklin was celebrated on London’s West End stage in 2015. But who was she, and what is her legacy?

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

But when the Nobel Prize was announced, Rosalind’s name wasn’t on the list. Rather, it bore the names of her colleague and of her closest competitors. How she got lost in the race has been widely discussed and written about, not least in three biographies. Each account espouses its own theories for why Rosalind didn’t receive the prize – albeit fractiously – at King’s College London on photographing DNA, the play has been lauded by critics for telling the tale without judgement. However, the way it has been interpreted by audiences, as in the case of the biographies which came before, once more highlights that Rosalind will forever be a mysterious and much debated figure of science.

“There has been a lot of talk about the play forwarding on this notion of Rosalind as a feminist icon, which Rosalind may not have wanted. And I totally agree, and it certainly wasn’t my intention to raise her up in this way, and certainly not to show her as a victim,” said Anna Ziegler, speaking to BBK from her home in Brooklyn, New York. “Because I don’t think she felt that she was a victim in any way, but as someone who was in control of her fate, aside from the cancer that killed her. So this has been a lesson for me in what happens when a work of art is out there in the public in a big way. It will be what people want it to be, or don’t want it to be.”

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

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

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

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

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

While Rosalind did not win the Nobel Prize, her legacy in the science community has been well noted – and not just the work she did at King’s. Her time at Birkbeck, though not part of Photograph 51’s dramatic arc, plays a large part in how she and her contributions are remembered today. Anna Ziegler said: “Don’t forget [a surviving colleague of Rosalind] said to me the other day that her time at Birkbeck was the most fruitful period of time in her life for her work. For example, she really did incredible work on the tobacco mosaic virus while at Birkbeck, and in fact she had lived and continued, she would have gone on to get a Nobel Prize for that work. People don’t really know that about her because they associate her with the DNA story.”

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

Professor Carolyn Moorer, of the Department’s Self-Assessment Team, said: “The male-dominated environment of mid-twentieth century academia is much less long gone but there is still work to do. Participation in the Athena SWAN scheme is helping us to work towards real equality for women in our labs.” Regarding Rosalind’s legacy, Professor Moorer said: “It is the power of rigorous fundamental science to lead to game-changing discoveries.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We have been extraordinarily fortunate to benefit from his research, vision and energy over the years and for the numerous ways he has contributed to furthering Birkbeck’s educational mission. We are honoured to know him and are grateful for his innumerable contributions to Birkbeck.
In 2014, when Dr Tony Atcherley was awarded the highest French accolade, the Légion d’honneur, it came as a huge surprise.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As for the teaching side of his career, he had a few sage words for current academics: “You can’t be defensive as a tutor; you have to be secure even if you don’t feel it. I think it’s great that modern students want to really get something important from their education at the end of the day, and not just a job, but something that develops you as a person.”
In 2015, the Peltz Gallery at Birkbeck explored challenging global discourses through the lens of art and experimental research and its relation to the wider world.

Mangled Metal
The role of the arts in exploring political and humanitarian phenomena was a particularly strong theme this year, as was aptly demonstrated in Artist’s Impression: Mangled Metal (8 June to 14 August 2015). The showcase of the first artist-in-residence at the gallery, a collaboration between the Peltz and Bow Arts, and influenced by the academic research of Birkbeck’s Dr Gabriel Koureas, artist John Timberlake’s mangled metal as an exhibitionary installation reflected on the use of mangled metal as an exhibitionary strategy by museums of war in representations of Britain’s ‘small wars’ from 1945 to the present day, and the terrorist attack.

The exhibition’s run, which coincided with the anniversary of the 7 July 2005 London bombings, included a discussion panel on how to commemorate survivors and victims in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. Speakers included the Chair of the Tavistock Square Memorial Trust, Philip Nelson.

Positive Living
A similarly powerful exhibition was held at the Peltz at the end of 2015, exploring the intersections of art, activism and medicine. Curated by the Director of the Peltz, Professor Annie Coombes, Positive Living: Art and AIDS in South Africa drew together artists and campaigners who were at the epicentre of the South African HIV/AIDS crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The exhibition of fine art, print-making, painting, photography, beadwork and embroidery also launched the Birkbeck Centre for Medical Humanities and was opened by Dr Karen Wells, co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Tavistock Square Memorial Trust.

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

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

This year, Daniel Peltz, whose generous donation helped to found the gallery in 2013, was welcomed as a Fellow of Birkbeck (see p42). Professor Coombes said: “The Peltz Gallery has played itself a central role in Caro Howell’s life. For starters, it has been there in her job titles, from her early years pioneering education and accessibility programmes for the likes of the Tate Gallery and Tate Modern, to her post as Head of Education for the Whitechapel Gallery. Now, as Director of the Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square, London, it is clear that education has not just been the backbone of Caro’s career, but in many ways it has also been the beating heart of it. Reflecting on her own education, Caro explained that within weeks of commencing a BA Theatre Studies course at Warwick University, the Sussex-born student knew that her passions lay elsewhere, although she saw the BA through to its conclusion. It was at Birkbeck, where she enrolled on the MA History of Art programme, that Caro found her feet. Her tutors were “invested in her uncertainty”, and instilled within her a sense that it was okay to take time to find one’s direction. Caro said: “If Birkbeck has a soundtrack, it is the sound of pennies dropping. It’s so enriching.”

The exhibition explored the heart-breaking experiences of Victorian women who, having ‘fallen from grace’, handed their infants over to the care of the Foundling Hospital at the end of the 18th century. The exhibition sought to reinstate the voices of these fallen women. The show’s impact will be felt for a long time after it comes to an end,”
Callaghan. He became deputy party leader in opposition, under Michael Foot, in 1980. His keen intellectual brain and sharp wit marked him out as a giant of British post-war politics.

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

Dr Mary-Lou Jennings (1934–2015)

An Honorary Teaching Fellow, Birkbeck. Birkbeck Fellow Marie-Louise (Mary-Lou) Jennings, who died on 3 August 2015 aged 81, began her long connection with the College first as a student, and then lecturer, in the Department of History. Having left school at 16, Dr Jennings trained as a secretary and worked for a number of Labour MPs. She was elected a Labour councillor for Hammersmith and Fulham, becoming borough member for the Inner London Education Authority in 1974, and subsequently chair of its Schools Sub-Committee.

It was when her daughter Anna began her studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies that Dr Jennings decided, aged 45, to enrol on Birkbeck’s History course, graduating in the same year as her daughter. An MA in Historical Studies followed, and then a PhD, “Newspapers and Nationalism: The Victorian Studies followed, and then a PhD, which was widely published as Dr Jennings’s first book.

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

The Rt Hon the Lord Noon OBE (1936–2015)

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

Born in Mumbai, Lord Noon worked for six years in the food industry in 1996 and was made a CBE in 1979 and retired as Emeritus Professor in 2015 after a lifetime of distinguished contributions to the field of geography.

His role at LSE led to his joining Birkbeck’s governing body in 1988. For some years he combined lecturing at LSE during the day and at Birkbeck in the evening, remaining in late life about the pleasure it gave him to teach and discuss his subject with Birkbeck’s mature students.

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

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

Ormond Uren (1919–2015)

Birkbeck lecturer, killed for wartime espionage. Ormond Uren, who died in July 2015 aged 97, worked in Birkbeck’s then Language Research Centre for almost 20 years, after an eventful early life. Born in West London, he was parachuted frequently before settling in Edinburg.

In 1937, aged 18, Ormond embarked on an affair with a Hungarian countess and spent a year on the run, picking up fluent Hungarian. In 1942 he was recruited by the Special Operations Executive for its Hungarian operations. It was around this time that he was also recruited by the British Foreign Office, picking up fluent Hungarian. Four days before he was due to parachute into Hungary, he was arrested and charged with espionage. At his trial, it emerged that he had passed on low-level military information to the national organiser of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Four days before he was due to parachute into Hungary, he was arrested and charged with espionage.

Professor Michael Wise CBE MBE (1918–2015)

Former Chair of Governors Professor Michael Wise, who died on 13 October 2013 aged 97, was part of the Birkbeck community for more than 45 years, first teaching, then serving as a Governor and Chair of Governors under a succession of College Masters, and finally as a Fellow of the College.

Born at the end of the First World War, Michael Wise gained a BA in Geography from the University of Birmingham in the mid-1930s. Awarded the Military Cross for his wartime service, he returned to Birmingham as an assistant lecturer after the war, gaining a PhD in 1951. He joined the London School of Economics as a lecturer, becoming Sir Ernest Cassel Reader in Economic Geography at LSE in 1954 and Professor in 1958. He received the CBE in 1959 and was elected as Emeritus Professor in 1985 after a lifetime of distinguished contributions to the field of geography.

For more details visit birk.ac.uk/our-community/tributes
I’d always known about Birkbeck, even back when I did my first degree at University College Dublin in the 1970s. Twenty years later – in the early 1990s - after a successful career in clinical psychology, I was managing a psychology department in east London and decided, as it was my first senior management role, I needed to gain new skills.

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

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

Studying at Birkbeck enabled me to work at the same time as pursuing my Master’s – I found that really suited my needs in terms of my work-life balance. I was living in north London at the time and the library became my second home. When I look back, the idea of Birkbeck – helping working people gain qualifications, skills and theoretical insights to apply to the workplace – has had a lasting impact on my life.

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

Now I’ve come full circle. I’m based in Ireland, practising clinical psychology in private practice, yet finding that increasingly people are coming to me with workplace issues, especially bullying. My time studying at Birkbeck still helps me understand the dynamics of the working environment.

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in leaving a legacy to Birkbeck, please contact Jessica Goulson in Development and Alumni on j.goulson@bbk.ac.uk or call 020 7380 3114 for more information.
If you think you might not fit in at university, think again. Birkbeck has a course for you, no matter what your age or educational background or whether you want to study full- or part-time.

### The typical Birkbeck student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female age</th>
<th>Male age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–20</td>
<td>18–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–24</td>
<td>21–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–29</td>
<td>25–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>30+</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of study</th>
<th>Undergraduate full-time students</th>
<th>Part-time students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,937 students studying</td>
<td>10,566</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course studied</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Degree</td>
<td>2,722</td>
<td>3,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Non-degree</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Taught</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>2,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Research</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>457</td>
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### Educational background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-levels and Baccalaureate</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE or equivalent</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications on entry</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to HE Diploma</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Other’ qualifications include: HNC/D, Level 2, postgraduate and many more.

### Alumni and friends

- **£5 MILLION**
  - **£1.6 million** left to Birkbeck in bursaries
  - **£1.6 million**
  - **£1.6 million**

- **266** Alumni and friends volunteered
- **1,242** Alumni and friends donated
- **1,608** Alumni and friends

### Corporate partners

- **142** Students receiving work experience through the Work Readiness programme
- **9** Corporate partners gave to Birkbeck

- **55%** of students receive a bursary
Harold Wilson is thought to have said, ‘A week is a long time in politics’. In higher education policy at least, the Government elected in May 2015 has confirmed politicians can do a lot in a short space of time.

In their first few months in office, for example, Ministers announced: a new Teaching Excellence Framework to evaluate the quality of university instruction; a renewed emphasis on widening participation so that there are more first-in-family students; a swifter entry regime for new higher education providers; an exit regime for unviable courses and institutions; the abolition of student maintenance grants; a freeze in the £21,000 student loan repayment threshold; an increase in the age limits and repayment terms for the new postgraduate loans; more financial support for part-time students; a restructuring of the Research Councils; and a revamp of higher education regulation. To ensure the new system operates as it is meant to, Ministers also promised that a higher education bill would set a new legal framework.

Laissez-faire it is not.

Before the election, many people predicted the biggest change to higher education policymaking would be sinking it back inside the Education Department. Michael Gove was known to have pushed for such a reordering. But this never seemed likely (at least to me), because David Cameron has long eschewed the constant Whitehall turbulence of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Long may it be so, because redrawing Whitehall boundaries blocks reform by sapping time and energy. It doesn’t even facilitate policymaking, because you just replace one set of boundaries with another.

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

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

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

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

Nick Hillman, Director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, gives his views on the implications of the 2015 General Election for higher education
Keep informed and stay in touch

We hope you have enjoyed reading about our year in this edition of BBK. There are many ways that you can stay connected with us throughout 2016 and beyond.

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