



DEPARTMENTAL NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN TERM 2011

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DEPARTMENTAL NEWS



The department would like to congratulate our recent graduates on their success and wish them luck in their future endeavors. The Graduation Ceremony will be held on November 9th.

A warm welcome to our new and returning students, we hope you have a fantastic year of study. We apologise for the overcrowding of some lectures during the first week of term – this has now been solved by hiring larger lecture rooms within the UCL campus. We welcome our two new Graduate Teaching Assistants: Jennifer Harris and Simon Groom. Earth and Planetary Sciences came 1st in the recent National Student Survey, as being the best Department in Birkbeck! Many thanks to all our students who gave their opinions in the survey.

Dr. Gerald Roberts has been awarded a £888,983 NERC Grant to study "Earthquake hazard from cosmogenic ³⁶Cl exposure dating of elapsed time and Coulomb stress transfer". Gerald is the lead scientist and will conduct and manage the research in central Italy, which is to be spread across Birkbeck, UCL, Durham University, Leeds University, the University of Ulster, the Scottish Universities Accelerator Mass Spectrometer Facility, the National Institute of Geophysics in Rome (INGV), the Italian Geological Survey and the National Oceanographic and Geophysics Observatory in Trieste. Gerald says "We will try to identify active faults that have (a) anomalously-long elapsed times since the last earthquake, dated with ³⁶Cl, and (b) have had their stress increased by rupture of neighbouring faults in historical earthquakes and palaeo earthquakes. Such locations are candidates for the next earthquake. We will communicate our findings to at-risk-populations through our civil-protection project partners in Italy".

Vincent Tong has been seconded to the College as the Technology-Enhanced Learning Champion responsible for strategy. The secondment started in October and is for two years. Vincent has also been awarded a book contract from the publisher Springer, and he is the editor of the book entitled "Geoscience Research and Education". He has also been awarded a Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) grant (£279000). He is the Birkbeck Principal Investigator of the Durham-Birkbeck-NOC-Manchester NERC consortium (£3.6M awarded in total). The project will involve conducting a joint seismic-oceanographic experiment over the mid-ocean ridge in the East Pacific.

Dr Charlie Bristow's latest paper on the sand dunes in Antarctica is featured on the cover of *Geology*, Sept 2011. Dr Charlie Bristow has been invited to Singapore, Vietnam and New Zealand to give workshops on his research in November.

Congratulations to John Cuningham for his successful completion of his PhD - titled "The occurrence of accretionary lapilli in a deep marine environment in `Eua, Tonga, SW Pacific." Supervisor Dr Andy Beard.

"Dr Phil Hopley has been awarded a three year NERC New Investigator grant to study the links between orbitally-forced climate change and inter-annual variability in the warmer world of the early Pleistocene. This work involves the collection of stable isotope data and annual-band measurements from a South African speleothem (cave carbonate)."

OFFICE MOVES

Academic staff offices will move to the 6th floor of Birkbeck's Main Building at the end of this term. The Administrative and Finance staff are also moving, so in future you will have to come to our new Department to find them! We will continue to teach in the existing classrooms for the rest of the academic year. Please come and see us in our new home!

BIRKBECK STUDENT GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Students are encouraged to join and participate in the activities of the Birkbeck Student Geological Society.

TERM DATES

Can be downloaded from the following link :<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates>

ENROLMENT

Please make sure you have enrolled. The annual counting of student numbers takes place during the first week of November and the College will lose money if your enrolment is late! It is important that you enrol as soon as possible

STUDENT FINANCE

The Student Financial Support team can give you information and advice if you are unable to afford your programme of study. If you would like further advice, or to make an appointment, please contact them on 020 7631 6362 between 12.00 and 5.30pm, Monday-Friday.

Appointments are available: Term time: Monday-Thursday 12.00-6.00; Friday 12.00-5.00; Out of term: Monday-Friday 12.00-5.00

USING THE LIBRARY

Most items on reading lists can be found in the Birkbeck Library based in Malet Street. Library tours for new students are arranged in the first few weeks of term and new students (or other students not familiar with the library) are strongly encouraged to sign up. Check the Birkbeck Library website for details.

Birkbeck Earth and Planetary Science students also enjoy normal borrowing rights at the University College London DMS Watson Library and are exempt from restrictions on borrowing that apply to other non-UCL students. However, new students will need to complete a form at reception and hand it in together with a photograph. You should take your Birkbeck Student ID when you apply.

SATURDAY OPENING THIS TERM

The Department will be open for undergraduate student study on Saturdays. Barbara Smith will be demonstrating from 10am to until 4pm on Nov 12, Nov 19, Nov 26, 3 Dec and 10 Dec.

WITHDRAWING FROM YOUR STUDIES

If for any reason you decide to withdraw from your programme of study, you must notify the College in writing as soon as possible. You should send your letter to Stephen Jenkins: Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Birkbeck University of London, Malet Street London WC1E 7HX. Departmental Office tel.: 020 7679 7333 and the Admissions team at: Registry, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX tel: 020 7631 6307/6389/6390/6392/6598, fax: 020 7631 6303, email: info@bbk.ac.uk. More details about withdrawing from your programme of study can be found on the following web address: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/records/withdraw>

DISABILITY

The range of support available to disabled students and the extent to which lecturers are experienced in providing support has increased considerably over the last few years. It is, however, important that this support is properly assessed and agreed with the Department. We recommend that students have their needs assessed by the disability co-ordinator, who will then make recommendations on your support to your Department. For more information please visit: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/disability>

The disabilities officer in the Department is Dr Andy Beard. He can be contacted on: a.beard@ucl.ac.uk or on 020 7679 2387.

EASTER FIELD CLASS DATES

Year 1 Field Trip

1st Year Field Class to Skye will be from 24th March to 4th April. Please pay £75 deposit to pay to Maz Iqbal. More information will be released at the end of term

Year 2 Field Trip

Scourie Field class 25th March 2012 (Sunday) to Thursday 5th April 2012. Please pay a £75 deposit to Maz Iqbal. More information will be released at the end of term

There will be a weekend field class for Principles of Sedimentology on March 10th, departing Saturday am, returning Sunday pm. Further details on this trip will be circulated in January 2012.

Year 3 Field Trip

The third year field class will be going to Morocco. Students need to be in Morocco on the evening of Thursday 22nd March 2012. Please book the 15.50 Ryan Air flight from Stansted Airport to Fez arriving at 19.10, and a return flight from Marrakech **NOT** Fez. The field class will end on April 1st 2012. Please book a flight for Sunday 1st of April 2012 from Marrakech back to the UK. The following carriers fly from Marrakech: Ryan Air; Easy Jet; British Airways; Royal Air Maroc. Please confirm attendance by contacting Dr Charlie Bristow: c.bristow@bbk.ac.uk. Secure a place by giving a £100 deposit before the October 31st to Maz Iqbal the Financial Administrator; cash is acceptable, and cheques should be made out to Birkbeck College.

Year 4 Field Trip

The fourth year field class is also going to Morocco. The dates are the 1st to 11th April 2012. Students need to book flights for 1st April, returning on 11th April, to and from Marrakech. The following carriers fly from Marrakech: Ryan Air; Easy Jet; British Airways; Royal Air Maroc. Dr Charlie Underwood will send further information about this trip to all students soon. The 3rd and 4th year trips have been broken up this time due to the large number of students in the department.

MISCELLANEOUS

Please ensure that the Department Administrator has your current address and daytime telephone number, including a mobile phone number if possible, in case a lecture has to be cancelled at short notice.

Face-to-face students should check the student pigeonholes (2nd floor) UCL South Wing regularly for mail addressed to them.

We would like to thank the student reps for all their hard work last year and will be looking for new student reps for this coming year.

Please collect any marked work from the Student Computer Room (2nd floor, South Wing). If distance learners have not yet received their assessed work, please let us know.

The Department website is regularly updated please keep an eye on: www.bbk.ac.uk/geology. Let us know of any links that do not work!

The Tim Newling fieldwork fund for postgraduate students has been awarded to Barbara Smith and the undergraduate awards are going to Maria Alves De- Matos and Jonathan Harvey.