EXPRESS

AUTUMN 2014
ISSUE 24

CULT OF CELEBRITY

REMEMBERING RIK staff and students share their stories
INSIDE CERN finding the next STEM generation
Welcome to the final issue of Express

As Brunel’s community magazine, Express has been charting the successes of the University’s community for the past six years.

On 1 August, staff from across Brunel gathered in the Eastern Gateway Auditorium to celebrate the completion of Transformational Change Programme, as well as Her Majesty’s approval of an order granting a Supplemental Charter to the University. As of that date, Brunel University is now known as Brunel University London, cementing its place in the heart of the UK’s largest Higher Education community. Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Julia Buckingham, stated that: “Today sees the start of an exciting new phase in the development of our University. I am confident that we will achieve our strategic goals and address society’s challenges, which is the vision that we continue to hold at the heart of all that we do at Brunel.”

An integral element of the change has been the implementation of the new branding, the development of which will now rest with the new Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment directorate. As part of the new strategy, Internal Communications will be focussing more on developing an improved IntraBrunel and other online channels, making this the final issue of Express.

Recent successes include Brunel being named as one of London’s top universities for student satisfaction, according to the National Student Survey (NSS). The results show that 89% of students were satisfied overall with their experience. Only two of the smaller ‘specialist’ higher education institutions in the capital enjoyed higher ratings.

There was also league table success with Brunel climbing into the top 250 universities in the world in the latest Times Higher Education ranking.

As always, if you have any comments or questions, please email the Internal Communications Team: communications@brunel.ac.uk

Professor Geoff Rodgers appointed to HEFCE Strategic Advisory Committee

Brunel’s Vice-Principal for Research, Professor Geoff Rodgers, has been named as one of the new members of HEFCE’s Knowledge Exchange Strategic Advisory Committee.

The group was established in January 2013 to provide advice and guidance to the HEFCE Executive and Board on the development and implementation of HEFCE policies in the area of research and knowledge exchange. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of grant allocations, implementation of REF 2014 as a funding model, as well as the support and training of new researchers.

The University wishes Professor Rodgers success during his two year tenure, which began on 1 July 2014.
A tribute to comic genius Rik Mayall (1958-2014)

As many readers will know, British comedian Rik Mayall passed away earlier in the year. A long-term Brunel collaborator, Rik starred in two productions filmed on campus – The Comic Strip in 1983 and Soapopolis in 2011. Max Kinnings, Creative Writing Lecturer, reflects on a long friendship.

“They say you should never meet your heroes. I guess that’s because they rarely, if ever, live up to expectations. I met one of my heroes a little over ten years ago, in March 2004, when I started work as Rik Mayall’s ghostwriter on his memoirs. To say I was nervous is an understatement. This was the man who played a pivotal role in changing the face of modern comedy with his sitcom, The Young Ones, and had gone on to appear in some of the most popular television shows of the modern era. But so began a working relationship and friendship that lasted right up until Rik’s untimely death in June of this year.

“The book we wrote together was Bigger Than Hitler Better Than Christ, a spoof autobiography of an eccentric egotistical madman. It was typical of Rik that he didn’t want to write a straight memoir; he refused to play the part of the successful actor and comedian trading on former glories. Rik could switch on the Rik Mayall persona as and when it was required but removed from an audience, microphone or camera, he was thoughtful, contemplative and possessed of a fierce intelligence. He was also riotously funny. He didn’t like to play by the rules and wanted no part of the vacuous world of celebrity.

“Rik was also a very kind and generous man. Brunel University London was a recipient of this generosity when, in 2011, I asked him if he would help with a project I was working on at Brunel with then Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Steve Dixon, an old friend of Rik’s from Manchester University. This was called Soapopolis and was the pilot episode of a web drama. Everyone who met him and worked with him will testify to his kindness, particularly those student actors who suddenly found themselves acting opposite one of the biggest names in British show business.

“Genius is a word that’s so overused that sometimes it’s become almost meaningless. But in Rik’s case, it’s the only word I can think of that sums up his abilities as a comedian and comic actor. Part of the tragedy of his passing is that, as a performer, he still had so much more that he wanted to do, so much more talent to give. Rik is sorely missed by all who knew him and loved him. It pains me deeply to think that I’ll never hear that joyful, carefree, roar of a laugh again.

“As for not meeting your heroes lest they disappoint you, my experience with Rik was quite the opposite. He was everything I hoped he would be, and so much more.”

The Rik Mayall Comedy Genius Award will be launched in 2014-15, open to all students in any discipline from across the University to reflect the spirit and work of Rik Mayall. It will be awarded only in very special instances where comedy genius is clear.

Ross Jennings, BA, Drama and English 09-12, assisted with and starred in Soapopolis:
“Outside the Artaud building, he offered me a ciggy. I actually made him laugh! He was a gentleman, incredibly kind and welcoming. Unforgettable.”

Eileen Pinkarchevski, Arts Centre Tutor, also appeared in Soapopolis:
“Rik Mayall was everything you would expect – funny and outrageous – but my overriding memory was of his patient professionalism, making the effort to speak to everyone, and providing encouragement.”

Recalling an Express interview in 2011, one of the University’s Press Officers recalls Rik:
“He was mesmerising, charismatic and brimming with exuberance.”
The latest Brunel Authors Series event was its most high profile to date, drawing a large crowd to the Library to hear Brunel’s Professor of Contemporary Thought Will Self in conversation with Creative Writing Lecturer Matt Thorne. Express spoke with the organisers Joanne Mcphie, Library Graduate Trainee, and Rob Wannerton, Head of Customer Services, about the Series so far.

Since joining in 2013, Joanne explains that “Rob’s considered running events that draw people to the Library for a while. I have an events background, and it’s logical for the Library to promote what we love: books, reading and learning.” The Series is notable for its inclusive atmosphere, gathering staff, students and public. “We have a wide audience at Brunel already,” Jo remarks. “We’re part of the community, and don’t want people to feel daunted about visiting our Library. Therefore the evenings are supposed to be fun as well as thoughtful – featuring performance as much as polemic.” The format of the evenings supports this. “We have drinks before the events,” states Jo, “not so it’s like an upmarket reception, but to break the ice, allowing people to relax.” Offering several medium-sized spaces, the Library “is not like a big lecture theatre – sometimes you’re only a few feet away from the discussion. You get drawn in, sometimes forcibly by the speaker!”

Recalling favourite memories from the Series, Joanne’s “highlight was the atmosphere at the poet Warsan Shire’s event – an emotional experience, as many really connected with her work. People were actually crying after speaking to her.” Rob remembers the Series launch, featuring local poet Daljit Nagra: “One of my favourite moments was Daljit’s enthusiastic, physical reading of some pretty saucy material, which I think the audience weren’t expecting from the Ramayana!”

Looking to the future, Jo and Rob hope to “diversify the types of speakers whilst maintaining that connection to writing.”

Check the Library’s blog for updates: https://storify.com/BrunelLibrary

Doggy duvets

At the end of the academic year, we donate hundreds of unwanted duvets from our student halls to the Dogs Trust in Harefield and the Battersea Dogs and Cats’ Home, through Hillingdon Council’s recycling collections team. If they weren’t donated to charities, these duvets would end up in landfill. The donation has helped to cut the charities’ overheads as well as giving vulnerable pets in their care a cosy place to sleep.

Are you looking to give a dog or cat a good home?

Please visit: www.dogstrust.org.uk or www.battersea.org.uk
Only the beginning

Only the Beginning was this year’s Graduate Exhibition by the Made in Brunel (MiB) team of student engineers, designers and innovators. Having previewed the event in issue 22, Express reports on some the key projects displayed in the Bargehouse on London’s Southbank.

The sandal that grows with your child

Elizabeth White (below) was the proud winner of the New Designers Mars Award at the New Designers 2014 exhibition, for her project ‘Grow’, a highly innovative plastic sandal design where the sandal grows and adjusts in length and width with the child wearing it, through a loop system and detachable straps. The design answers a clear issue of children outgrowing their clothes and shoes too quickly, leaving parents to purchase new ones on a regular basis.

Her prize was £1,000 and a two week placement in the Mars Design Studio. Elizabeth said: “It was a huge pleasure to meet and introduce my work to the judges and to see their enthusiasm for the sandal. To go in and win this award was a real honour – it made my day.”

James the Giraffe

Benjamin Alport created James the Giraffe, an interactive ball popping toy, equipped with lights, sounds and textures, designed for children at six months or older. A brief set by Mothercare/Early Learning Centre UK asked for a floor toy to expand their six-months-plus product range.

Benjamin said: “James helps to develop hand-to-eye coordination and fine motor skills. The idea behind the toy is for children to put a plastic ball into the giraffe’s head, hear it move down the body and pop out of the ‘feet’ randomly with the element of surprise.”

Subsequently the project has been taken further by the Early Learning Centre and is pending to launch later this year.
Seeing a light through the smoke

Xander Dawood won the Luminaire Prize for inventing a combined smoke detector and LED light bulb to make homes safer. He created his ‘FireLight’ after discovering that up to 38 percent of smoke detectors fitted in the UK do not work, often because of low batteries. He looked to develop an alternative solution that was not only more reliable, but also easy to install and affordable.

“After designing LED street lights on my placement year in China, I saw huge scope for integrating other electronics into widely used fittings,” explained Dawood. ‘Current issues with smoke detectors coupled with my previous experience in lighting led me towards FireLight.”

The prize was co-sponsored by Wimbledon-based architectural lighting manufacturers Precision Lighting and Remote Controlled Lighting. Both firms have close ties to Brunel and many of their designers and managers are Brunel alumni.

Commenting on the winning design, Precision Lighting’s Design and Engineering Manager, former Brunel graduate Peter McClelland said: “We were impressed by the amount of work that had gone into this product. Xander had designed and built a fully working prototype that solves a real and very serious problem.”

Beautiful sound

30 students were handpicked from Brunel and other top design universities across the world to enter a competition to produce a new style for the A9, an elegant and high-end music system by audio manufacturer Bang & Olufsen. They were invited to create a design based upon their personal ideas about what music means.

Andrew Guscott (right) took the top position in the competition with his Rosemaling creation. He said: “To me, music is something to be shared, so I looked up patterning on traditional instruments and the Hardanger Fiddle popped up. I thought about how this traditional pattern would look like as a modern interpretation, and the result is my design. The project was quite daunting as the A9 is such an iconic design, but I hope I have added something to it!”

The winning design was presented in Paris in May. Sam Whyman, another Brunel student, and Sauli Flander from Aalto in Finland were joint finalists.

AfricaBike

Robert Bye successfully created a suitable bike frame for African children to use to get to school. Supported by Bikes 4 Africa, James Dyson Foundation and Dave Granshaw Association, the problem he faced was that while European bikes were being donated to African countries, they were made using different components to the African models, which meant that the bikes could not be repaired easily once they stopped working. To get a handle on the issues involved with this problem, Rob visited Africa with a prototype bike.

He said: “I spent time with local bike mechanics, talked to the school children who would use the bikes and even lived with the locals. But crucially I met with the mechanics at Jole Rider, a local charity, and spent time fixing the bicycles on a daily basis. It wasn’t just about learning the mechanics of the bikes; it was about identifying the needs of emerging markets. This ethnographical research gave me insights that I would never be able to reach in any other way.”

The research resulted in a bike that not only used the right components, but met the demanding physical needs of the children using them. Subsequently Rob received a scholarship from the James Dyson Foundation for his hard work.
Brunel Engineers: The Showcase 2014

This annual showcase event celebrates the final year project work of our BEng, MEng and MSc Engineering students, and provides an opportunity for employers to engage with up and coming engineers from Brunel.

www.brunelengineers.com
Local Design Outreach

This year we offered selected secondary school pupils (years 10-13) the opportunity to join a free interactive design session in collaboration with the James Dyson Foundation and Dave Granshaw Foundation. The session aims to encourage and inspire young people to consider studying Design during their academic career.

The pupils were asked to design a new vacuum cleaner for Dyson with cardboard and old vacuum pieces.

A teacher from Mill Hill School commented: “Thank you so much for organising the event so beautifully – the activities were amazing and hooked the pupils in immediately. I loved the presentations at the end and thought the ideas generated were exciting and the modelling gave a good idea of how the concepts would look. The catering was superb and the whole day was a complete success. Well done to you at Brunel and to the Dyson team for an inspirational day out – we are extremely grateful to have been chosen.”
Brunel has teamed up with English Heritage to stage an authentic form of a 17th century Ben Jonson play at the castle where it was originally performed.

Imagine stepping back in time to 1634, during the reign of King Charles I, to become a member of the audience who visited Bolsover Castle in Derbyshire, to see ‘Love’s Welcome’, an extravagant masque performance commissioned by the castle’s owner, William Cavendish, the Earl of Newcastle, as part of the entertainment for a royal visit.

Directed by Brunel’s expert in historic performance Professor Tom Betteridge, two performances of ‘Love’s Welcome’ took place on 26 and 27 July in the castle’s fountain garden, which involved a number of Brunel students as characters. Audience members had the opportunity to take part in and inform this exciting new historical research project – part of a larger endeavour to investigate William Cavendish’s patronage in the 1630s, and to use Bolsover Castle spaces and gardens to entertain.

Owned by English Heritage, the Castle had just reopened after a major refurbishment of the interior rooms and exterior wall walk, and provided a golden opportunity for Dr. Nicola Stacey, Senior Properties Historian at English Heritage, to collaborate with James Knowles, Professor of Renaissance Literature and Culture at Brunel. Together, by attempting to recreate the masque’s original atmosphere for an audience picnicking in the garden, they explored the significance of the 1634 royal visit to Bolsover, increasing understanding of the social/political context, and impact as entertainment, of ‘Love’s Welcome’.

These restaged performances were designed to engage audience members from beginning to end. Upon arriving at the castle, participants took the role of Cavendish’s guests. Although there is no record of the 1634 performance of ‘Love’s Welcome’ being preceded by a customary
Bolsover Castle

‘anti-masque’, or short performance in which forces of danger or disorder are seen to menace the court and country, it was felt that this was needed for modern-day audience members to understand the context. Building on historical research supplied by Professor Knowles and Brunel PhD student Collette Wheeler, students involved in ‘Love’s Welcome’ developed their own interpretation of the social and political issues surrounding the court of King Charles I and how these issues may have impacted on the royal visit to Bolsover.

Brunel drama students, Danäelle Cambrook and Ryan Laughton, played the parts of local lead miners, caught up in the rioting and petitioning of the King over taxation, which took place while William Cavendish was lavishly entertaining his guests in 1634. The stark contrast between the poverty of the lower classes and the opulent wealth of the upper classes was bitterly emphasised. Moving up the social ladder, Brunel’s Celia Linnett and Emily Britton gave a delightful insight into what it was like to work as a laundress in a 17th century aristocratic household. Playing the part of Lady Catherine Harpur, Cavendish’s step-daughter, Georgia Laws delivered a gracious welcome to the guests. In all anti-masque episodes, improvisation and repartee with audience members ensured a unique immersive experience.

After taking in the vocal delights of three singers performing songs by contemporary composers Henry Lawes and Nicholas Lanier that transformed Bolsover into a ‘palace of love’, and experiencing a formal welcome from William Cavendish and King Charles I, brilliantly delivered from the steps and balcony of Bolsover’s ‘little castle’, audience participants progressed to an outdoor stage to watch the main masque performance, sitting alongside the King and Queen.

‘Love’s Welcome’, though different in format from a traditional masque performance in that it was performed as a country house entertainment instead of a court production, still contained a typical masque theme. The central text is a discourse on the nature of love: a homage to the mutual love of the King and Queen, the harmony of perfect love, the concord of marriage and the devotion of Cavendish, the loving host. The staging would have involved dramatic song and dance, elaborate costumes, and mechanized stage sets. The 2014 performances focused on recreating the music by using the country’s leading early music professionals and historic instruments. Charlotte Ewart, one of the UK’s leading historical dance specialists, was commissioned to provide appropriate choreography. Dancers, led by Brunel student, Raheem Mir, as Captain, executed a lively ‘Dance of the Mechanicals’ in which ordinary working people: builders, plumbers, glaziers, and blacksmiths celebrated the ‘holiday’ (holy-day) of the royal arrival. The last part of the masque involved two cupids, played by Brunel students, Sophie Farell and Maeve McPhillips, staging a debate as to who loved the most, and Philalethes, the ‘lover of truth’, who pronounced Bolsover the ultimate place of love.

Professor Knowles, who edited the most recent modern text of ‘Love’s Welcome’, commented, ‘This was a great opportunity for us to explore a literary text as a social text. I particularly liked the fact that the dance by local people allowed us to think about the history of the ordinary people behind what was definitely an extraordinary event. Performance research changes the ways in which we think about these texts but also the social texts that surrounded them: these can really be brought alive for a modern audience through interactive performance.’

Dr Stacey added that, ‘the production will help define plans the team at Brunel University London and English Heritage hope to take forward in the future, including possible different performance locations at the castle and how to construct historic stage machinery at the site.’

Professor Betteridge will give his inaugural lecture ‘A History of English Theatre 1381-2014’ on 13 November 2014, at 5.30pm in the Eastern Gateway Building auditorium.
Creative Writing on the rise

In addition to coverage of recent successes by Brunel’s Creative Writing (CW) department in issue #23, Express can report that the department, alongside English Literature, are now amongst the Top 6 in the Guardian UK Subject Tables 2015, with Music also rising to 7th place.

Max Kinnings, Creative Writing Subject Leader, stated that: “This is a very pleasing result which reflects the hard work that we’ve all put in across English and Creative Writing, ensuring that teaching and student satisfaction are right at the heart of what we do.”

Meanwhile, Brunel CW alumna Joanna Merifield has won the Lucy Cavendish College Fiction prize – a key indicator of emerging new literary talent awarded annually to an unpublished female novelist over the age of 21 – for the first 10,000 words of her debut novel The Second Garden.

Reader in Creative Writing Bernardine Evaristo (below) was one of 8 winners of the Jerwood Fiction Uncovered Prize, “dedicated to rewarding the best British Fiction writing across all forms, however it is published,” for her latest novel Mr Loverman.

This summer was also busy for Brunel’s “High Priestess of Steampunk” Liesel Schwarz who ran a Guardian Writing Masterclass, spoke at the London science fiction conventions NineWorlds and Worldcon, and held a local book signing in Waterstones, Uxbridge.

The Garden of Shadow and Delight

Express meets
Rebecca Hubbard, a Brunel Creative and Professional Writing alumna who has just published her first poetry anthology, The Garden of Shadow and Delight, which she describes as “a prose poetry anthology about gardens and our relationship with them.”

Rebecca explains the motivations behind her writing: “I grew up immersed in the deep rhythms of nature. As a child, the garden was a place of wonder, pleasure, comfort and refuge, but also at times a place of exile, loss and hardship. I’ve worked as a professional gardener for 12 years, tending and developing the ornamental areas on an extensive and idyllic estate – home to a Camphill community for adults with special needs.”

Having written “garden poems and pieces of flash fiction” for her MA dissertation, Rebecca revised “over 100”, which eventually became The Garden of Shadow and Delight.

Interested in exploring “how the garden functions as a template and complex metaphor for human experiences”, Rebecca drew upon a variety of influences – including philosophy, garden histories, blogs, myths, and poets such as Edward Thomas, Laurie Lee, and Gillian Clarke – with the intention of creating “a multi layered collage or democracy of voices that spoke about or from within the garden.”

“Each needed to be a highly concentrated fragment,” she explains, “so prose poetry and flash fiction worked effectively.”

Asked about the process of publication, Rebecca emphasise that producing “unusual, hard to categorize writing like mine” can be positive, as a small independent publisher such as Cinnamon was more open to this style of writing. The Garden of Shadow and Delight was published in September through Cinnamon Press, with a launch party in London.

Naked Scientist is Alumna of the Year

Dr Hannah Critchlow, who received a BSc in Cell and Molecular Biology at Brunel in 2003, has been named as our Alumna of the Year.

Hannah is a neuroscientist with a background in neuropsychiatry. In 2014 she was selected as one of the UK’s Top 100 scientists by the Science Council for her work in science communication.

Inspired through her work as a nursing assistant at St Andrews Psychiatric Hospital, she went on to work as strategic manager for Cambridge Neuroscience. On secondment she helped steer and coordinate the re-launch of the British Neuroscience Association between 2010 and 2011. She credits her eye-opening experiences on the ward with leading her to pursue a career in neuroscience and educate the public.

Hannah is best known to the public for her role in the Naked Scientists, who describe themselves as a media-savvy group of physicians and researchers from Cambridge University who use radio, live lectures, and the Internet to strip science down to its bare essentials, and promote it to the general public. Their award winning BBC weekly radio programme reaches a potential audience of 6 million listeners across the east of England, and also has an international following on the web.

In 2013 she was named as one of Cambridge University’s ‘inspirational and successful women in science’. During her PhD she was awarded a Magdalene College, Cambridge University Fellowship and as an undergraduate at Brunel received three University Prizes as Best Biologist.

Hannah has just started working with Headcase, a new mental health awareness project, empowering people through open discussion and knowledge about the brain.

Blackout shows need to switch off

The results of the first Brunel Blackout audit in May, involving volunteers from Brunel Environment Sustainability and Travel (BEST) Group, as well as staff and the Student Union, can now be revealed.

The aim was to audit four buildings and record items that had been left on unnecessarily. Volunteers found almost 300 monitors, over 100 computers and almost 50 printers left on, as well as lights left on in 50 rooms. Volunteers were rewarded with pizza, a raffle, and volunteering hours.

The Lecture Centre, Mary Seacole, Elliot Jaques and Eastern Gateway were targeted with the Lecture Centre reporting the largest number of PCs left on, whilst Elliot Jaques had the most printers on.

Extrapolating these findings it was worked out that if these devices were needlessly left on for 12 hours a day for an entire year (a rough estimate), this would equate to £87,501.47 in wasted electricity and £5,096.08 in carbon emissions.

The next challenge will be to do a campus wide audit of all buildings. Watch out for calls for volunteers via IntraBrunel and the BEST Facebook group.
Student receives the Boris seal of approval for competition promotion

MBA student, Rajan Dua, has received a certificate from the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, in recognition of his hard work as Ambassador for the Low Carbon Entrepreneur 2014 competition.

Partnered with Siemens, the Mayor’s Low Carbon Entrepreneur (LCE) 2014 competition was open to London’s further and higher education students and recent graduates. It sought innovative ideas to help reduce London’s CO₂ emissions by 60 per cent before 2025 with a £20K prize for the overall winner.

Rajan promoted the competition extensively across the University, helping Brunel’s Entrepreneurship Consultant, Barry Hodges-White give LCE Staff the opportunity to speak at an entrepreneur training event.

His hard work paid off when Brunel entered with 19 applications this year, the second highest number of any London institution, and a massive increase from 2013 where only one application was received.

Rajan entered the competition with his project Green Wall Street, which aims to educate new generations of citizens on current environmental and sustainability issues by running an awareness progress program in partnership with schools, colleges, universities, local councils and organisations.

Rajan commented: “Participating in the Low Carbon Entrepreneur 2014 competition has been a wonderful and rewarding experience – a great opportunity to showcase our ideas and contribute towards building a green city of tomorrow. The possibilities at Low Carbon Entrepreneur competition are endless – from getting funding to implement your bright idea, to several rewards in form of internship opportunities at Siemens and City Hall. I look forward to further developments with my idea, and to participate again in the Low Carbon Entrepreneur Competition for 2015.”

Commonwealth success for Brunel alumni

Two Brunel alumni took home medals from the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Ashley Bryant won silver in the Decathlon. The 2013 Sports Science graduate took to the podium following an incredible PB in the pole vault. Bryant produced a javelin of 66.24m, a 4:38.24 1500m and the all-important 4.07m pole vault for a total of 8,109 points to secure his own debut international medal. Canadian Damian Warner scored 8,282 points to win gold, with Grenada’s Kurt Felix took bronze.

Nigel Levine (Engineering 2013) then took home the Gold in the men’s 4x400m relay, with his Brunel Athletic Centre training partner, Conrad Williams. Margaret Adeoye, who also trains regularly at Brunel, made the semi-finals in the 400m.

Other Brunel graduates to feature in the Games included Nathan Fox (International Business, 2013) who made it to the final of the Triple Jump and Chloe Spiteri (Sport Sciences, 2011) who just missed out on a bronze medal in the wrestling.
Magical moments pay off for talented scholars

Eight students who benefitted from a Brunel scheme to develop talented schoolchildren have received scholarships to support their education.

The former graduates of the University's Urban Scholars programme were awarded between £1,000 and £3,000 by Tata Global Beverages, in the third year the owner of the Tetley Tea brand has supported the scheme.

Entrants to the scheme submitted 300 words on the theme of 'magical moments' – describing a time in everyday life when a hidden moment is discovered.

Ashley Toppin-Hector received the highest award of £3,000 for describing his 26-mile daily commute to Brunel. “I allowed my pen and my thoughts to run away. I’d like to thank Tata Global Beverages for their kind gesture, which will prove invaluable – contributing towards funding for relevant seminars, workshops and courses that will help me on my route to chartered engineer status.”

Additional scholarships were awarded to Tycjan Jaworski, Kane Harrison, Evangeline Chamdal, Kateri Dabreo, Joshua Maguire, Marley Edwards and Romell Dawkins.

All took part in Brunel's Urban Scholars programme, which gives local schoolchildren who have shown academic potential the chance to visit the University throughout their school career.

Professor Valsa Koshy, director of the Brunel Able Children’s Centre (BACE) which operates the Urban Scholars programme, said: “It has been a huge success for Brunel, ensuring pupils have every opportunity to excel, regardless of their background or the type of school they attend.”

Ajoy Misra, CEO of Tata Global Beverages, added: “We are proud to continue our association with Brunel's Urban Scholars programme. This year’s submissions were an inspiration to us all, demonstrating that magical moments are often to be found in the simplest of things.”

Final Year Drama Students’ Perform

As part of the requirements for completing their course, final year drama students at Brunel presented end-of-year performances of their work in May. There was a range of talent on display and a wide variety of creative and thought-provoking productions such as ‘50 Shades of Black’ and a performance with elements of Indian classical dance.

PCC kick-starts graduate careers

Over 50 exhibitors and hundreds of students attended the annual National Graduate Recruitment Fair, organised by the Placement and Careers Centre (PCC). With 1000s of jobs on offer and valuable networking taking place, many Brunel students were able to effectively kick-start their career search after having recently finished exams. Careers staff were also on hand to provide quick 5-minute CV checks and share advice on development of employability skills.

Acting Director of the PCC, Michelle Kavan, commented that “The Summer Graduate Fair is a perfect opportunity for our students to take stock of their career prospects. Employers to recruit for positions still available on graduate schemes or in particular areas of their businesses which need further support for the autumn intake.

As part of Transition Week, the PCC also organised a lunch for around 50 students and 25 alumni participants from companies as diverse as HSBC, Vodafone, Goldman Sachs, and Ministry of Sound. The event took the form of a careers speed-networking session in which students and employers actively engaged with each other in round table discussions while enjoying finger food and refreshments.

Postgraduate Survey winner collects iPad

This year’s lucky winner of the Postgraduate Taught Programme Survey prize draw was Sunita Amornpinyo from the Brunel Business School, studying towards an MSc in Management.

The feedback given by our students is highly valued and allows us to improve our provision year on year. We thank everyone who spent a few minutes giving us feedback that will enable us to improve things for future Brunel students.

Brunel University Film Festival 2014

This year’s edition of Brunel University Film Festival (BUFF), celebrating the work of School of Arts Film and TV undergraduates, took place on May 16.

Films produced by undergraduates from all levels were screened, building up to a showcase and awards ceremony. Special guest, award-winning filmmaker Antonio Ribeiro expressed his appreciation of the creative diversity and talent on offer.

Student filmmakers were presented with awards in three categories: documentary, experimental and fiction. The winners were: Here At Last (Nicole Britz), The Model Made Man (Zophia Komorowska-Gillam), Silence Fiction (Kristijonas Dirse).
CelebYouth Project

Why do young people think Beyoncé deserves her fame but Kim Kardashian doesn’t? What does this say about teenagers accused by politicians and the media of valuing celebrity over all other ambition?

Hard work helps celebrities to top of the class

Speaking at the conference, Dr Mendick stated that: “One of the key findings of the study is the centrality of hard work in the judgments that young people make of celebrities. ‘Contrary to politicians’ claims about a celebrity-obsessed ‘get-rich-quick’ generation, our work shows that young people are highly critical of the ways in which fame is earned and sceptical about the rewards of celebrity.” Dr Mendick also warned that the emphasis on hard work as an explanation for success masks inequalities in the opportunities available to young people due to social class, race and gender.

Guest speaker Justin Hancock, a youth worker and sex education trainer, said the research recognised that celebrity combined with gender and class issues helped inform young people’s own narratives. Based on his own work with young people, he joined the researchers in disrupting moral panics over the damaging effects of celebrity on young people, seeing them as critical consumers of the media. Justin said: “Not everyone’s going to get the same message from celebrity. People are different, they have different values and education.”

CelebYouth Project

CelebYouth, a research project focussed upon answering such questions, culminated in the conference ‘Celebrity and Youth Aspirations’ at Brunel on 11 July 2014. Fully titled ‘The role of celebrity in young people’s classed and gendered aspirations’, the project was a two-year collaboration between Brunel’s Dr Heather Mendick and Dr Kim Allen at Manchester Metropolitan University, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.
Interviews with young people

The researchers conducted 24 group interviews with 148 young people from six state schools in London, Manchester and the rural South-West. During the 40-55 minute sessions, the mixed groups were asked questions about their views on celebrities, and were often allowed to lead the discussion.

Group Demographics
- 81 females and 67 males;
- 82 were White British and 62 from a mix of Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds, including 27 Asian (predominantly Pakistani and Indian), 9 Black (Caribbean and African), 7 Somali, 5 Afghan and 9 who identified as ‘mixed’;
- 63 of the participants said one of their parents had been to university and 64 that none had, with the remainder unsure or choosing not to answer.

Questions asked:
- Can you please identify the celebrities who you most like?
- And those you dislike?
- Please describe your ideal celebrity
- What do you think makes someone a celebrity?
- Please describe how you ‘consume’ celebrity

Celebrities mentioned
- Bill Gates
- Twitter’s Jack Dorsey,
- Winston Churchill
- Fred West
- Beyoncé
- Justin Beiber
- Gamers KSI and PewDiePie
- Will Smith
- Emma Watson
- Barack Obama
- Boris Johnson

Bryony Kimmings AKA Catherine Bennett on ‘Tween Girl Culture’

Bryony Kimmings, performance artist and Brunel alumna, returned to campus to give an illustrated lecture performance about her alternative kids’ pop-star Catherine Bennett. Casting her 9 year old niece Taylor as ‘manager’, Bryony created the character to argue that kids creating their own popular culture was better than the corporations and record labels infiltrating and commodifying childhood for them. Bennett has since been busy; invited to the Houses of Parliament, meeting Yoko Ono, appearing on Woman’s Hour, being on Sky News across the world, and gaining airplay on Radio 1.

Contact
CelebYouth: www.celebyouth.org/mythbusting
Bryony Kimmings: www.bryonykimmings.com
Starters and Leavers

Express welcomes some new faces and says goodbye to some of our colleagues who left Brunel between June and July 2014.

Welcome to…
- Lauren Shiel Internal Communications Officer
- Keith Coles External Communications Officer
- Farbod Khoshnoud Lecturer Mechanical Engineering
- Kimberly Smith Lecturer in Psychology
- Diane Ellison Placement Practice Manager Occupational Therapy
- Yicong Li International Marketing Manager
- Minsun Pak Head of Conference, Conference Office

Farewell to…
- Helen Emerson Head of Registry, Registry
- Jeffrey Wagland Head of Brand and Communications
- Paul Dimmock Director, Sports Centre
- Rachel Laszbekan PR Manager, Computer Science
- Markus Kohler Lime Programme Manager, Materials and Manufacturing Central Office
- Alison Blank Lecturer, Occupational Therapy
- Douglas Brown Lecturer in Games Theory and Design, Screen Media
- Damon Daylamani Zad Computer Officer, NSS School of Engineering and Design
- Elizabeth Woodward Head of Events and Campus Co-ordinator, Events
- Norman Bonney Head of Computer Centre, Computer Centre
- Linda Murgett HR Admin Manager, Human Resources
- Alberto Testa Lecturer, Sport
- Lisa Heyes Marketing Officer, International Pathways and Language Centre

Bomb specialist leaves Brunel to start life as amateur historian

By Deborah King

Norman Bonney, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel at 631 Explosives Ordnance Disposal Squadron in Northolt, also managed to fit in being Director of the Computer Centre. He started at Brunel in December 1972 on the princely sum of £2,400 per annum and worked his way up to being Deputy Director of the Computer Centre and then Acting Head in 2002 and became Director in February 2003.

At his retirement party in June, colleagues from across the University gathered to hear Paul Thomas, Chief Operating Officer, pay tribute to Norman: “He has been a regular and full supporter of campus, a tremendous ambassador for the University with an enviable reputation across the sector, with our suppliers and within the local community.”

Tony Yates, Deputy Director of the Computer Centre, gave thanks on behalf of the computer centre and media services team. Other staff members also expressed their sadness at his leaving. Dr Wafi Al Karaghouli said: “Norman is a gentleman. It is very hard to come by someone with his managerial and technical skill. Without him I would not have my doctorate.” Frances Dearn, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, said “Norman has a wicked sense of humour. He always manages to capture people in one word.” Peter Polkinghorne said Norman is “calm and unflappable”.

Norman is going to undertake some historical research into the military and finally get around to doing all the jobs his wife, Margaret, has asked him to do.
Professor Khan Appointed Coordinator for Top Physics Experiment

Akram Khan, Professor of Experimental Particle Physics and e-Science at Brunel, is entering a Coordinator role for the world’s most closely followed scientific experiment.

Prof Khan has been appointed Top Cross Section Coordinator for the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS), a detector at the Large Hadron Collider, the preeminent particle collider that is searching for clues to explain the state of the universe less than a millionth of a second after the Big Bang.

He is taking a two-year position to research full time at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), which is in charge of the CMS and other detectors at the Large Hadron Collider, located outside Geneva.

“These will be two of the most exciting years of my career,” Prof Khan said. “As Coordinator, I will define the goals and types of studies that researchers will undertake at the CMS as the detector hunts for particles theorised to exist, and possibly new ones as well.”

Professor Peter Hobson, Leader of the Particle Physics Group at Brunel, said: “Akram’s appointment as the CMS Top Cross Section Coordinator positions him in the hub of the science activities.

“It is fantastic that one of our professors will provide leadership over the scientific research, especially during this new phase when substantial new discoveries about our universe are highly anticipated.”

The Top Cross Section Physics Coordinator is considered one of the key physics analysis positions in the CMS collaboration. The CMS management board approved the selection, and the collaboration’s 172 institutes ratified the decision. Prof Khan took up the position as of January 2014.

Frank Griffith curates

Music Lecturer Frank Griffith has recorded two CDs with internationally recognised jazz vocalist, Tina May, for the Hepjazz label. The album “Haunted Heart” was released in September 2014. Frank was arranger, saxophonist/clarinetist, music director, and assistant producer for the CD, which celebrates songs by iconic singers like Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, and Edith Piaf. Writing about May in the Observer, critic Dave Gelly stated that: “not only has her singing matured, she has found the perfect arranger for the job in Frank Griffith”.

Frank also curated and organised the first annual String Quartet Festival at London’s leading jazz venue, Pizza Express Dean Street, which took place over four days in April 2014.

Links:

- www.hepjazz.com
- www.tinamay.com
- www.frankgriffith.co.uk
Higgs, Hadrons and the Next STEM Generation

These photos show two of the newest buildings at CERN in 1999, the hostel building and the new building hosting members of the ATLAS and CMS collaborations.

Images by Patrice Loiez; 8 Oct 2013
While Brunel is rightly proud of its reputation in applied research there is a small group of experimental particle physicists on campus whose focus remains resolutely on pushing back the boundaries of human knowledge regarding the earliest stages of the universe.

Supported by funds from the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), the team consists of Professor Akram Khan, Dr Jo Cole, Dr Paul Kyberd, Dr Dawn Leslie, Dr Liliana Teodorescu, and is led by Professor Peter Hobson. They are all key members of the world’s largest scientific experiment, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN, the European Particle Physics Laboratory where they help try and understand the fundamental physics of the universe.

As well as their contributions to science, with Prof Khan recently appointed Top Cross Section Coordinator for the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS), a detector searching for clues to explain the state of the universe less than a millionth of a second after the Big Bang, Prof Hobson’s team is passionate about inspiring the next generation of physical scientists and engineers - while they are still at school.

Following global interest in the discovery of the Higgs Boson, UK particle physicists provided a stand at both the Big Bang Fair and the Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition. These attracted huge interest from a total audience of around 90,000, with Brunel physicists an integral part of the outreach team.

But the team’s contribution to encouraging more young people to study maths and physics to age 18 does not stop there.

Drs Cole and Leslie run the highly successful “Girls Allowed” events on the campus designed to counter the misconception that physics is a boys’ subject. In July, 112 girls spent a packed day designing their own particle detector and “speed-dating” with a variety of female role models from HIV researchers to engineers for whom studying maths and physics was essential to their careers.

Said Dr Cole: “The UK simply does not produce enough STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) graduates and the biggest under-exploited talent pool is girls still at school. "While there are a lots of reasons for girls opting instead for chemistry and biology, exposing them to positive role models and opening their eyes to the huge range of career options that A-level maths and physics can unlock makes all the hard work in organising and running the days worthwhile."

Fellow particle physicist Dr Paul Kyberd is another keen STEM outreach advocate. As well as being another stalwart of the LHC stand, he runs an annual residential course for school physics teachers at Brunel to bring them up to speed on advances in particle physics.

The teachers are fully funded by the Goldsmiths’ Company and the highlights of the week are visits to both CERN and the Rutherford Appleton Lab at Harwell.

And while not a member of Prof Hobson’s team, Brunel mechanical engineering undergraduate Conor Sheehan will also be in Geneva this academic year as the first of what is hoped to be a long line of placement students at CERN.

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**Five facts about the LHC and CERN**

1. **The LHC is so big that the physicists and engineers have to take into account the phases of the moon in focusing the beam.**

2. **Each of the 6000-9000 superconducting filaments of niobium-titanium in the cable produced for the LHC is about 0.007 mm thick, about 10 times thinner than a normal human hair. If you added all the filaments together they would stretch to the Sun and back six times with enough left over for about 150 trips to the Moon.**

3. **The central part of the LHC is the world’s largest fridge with a temperature colder than deep outer space. The vacuum inside is 100 times more rarefied than the surface of the Moon.**

4. **The data recorded by each of the big experiments at the LHC is enough to fill around 100,000 dual layer single-sided DVDs every year.**

5. **The LHC’s biggest detector – ATLAS – weighs 7000 tons, the same as the UK’s recently launched new nuclear submarines, but had to be built underground.**

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*Image by McCauley, Thomas; Taylor, Lucas, 7 May 2013*
When women earn more, promiscuity is more accepted

A new study conducted by Brunel psychologists shows that in social environments where women are less economically dependent on men, people are more accepting of promiscuity.

The study entitled “Female Economic Dependence and the Morality of Promiscuity” was conducted by a team comprising Dr Nicholas Pound, Dr Isabel Scott, and lead-researcher Dr Michael Price.

The team found that in U.S. states where women earn more money and are perceived as being less economically dependent, attitudes towards promiscuity are more relaxed. They also found that people who know more economically-dependent women tend to be more opposed to promiscuity.

These relationships between anti-promiscuity morality and female economic dependence persisted, even after controlling for other influences on sexual morality such as religion and conservatism. Moreover, attitudes towards promiscuity were specifically related to female income, rather than male income.

According to Dr Price, the findings have important implications for how people in different cultures judge the sexual behaviour of others. “In regions where women earn less,” he states, “people may be more hostile towards practices such as open marriage, and more likely to think that promiscuous people deserve any hardships that befall them.”

Dr Price explains the results in terms of evolutionary psychology: “When women and children depend more on men, it becomes more important for people to know who a child’s father is, and promiscuity makes this harder to know.”

The study draws on U.S. economic and census data, and also surveyed over 5,000 people about their views on promiscuity and the extent to which they knew women who depend financially on men.

“Female Economic Dependence and the Morality of Promiscuity” is published in the journal Archives of Sexual Behavior:

http://link.springer.com/journal/10508

Law lecturer comments on Sarkozy investigation

Brunel Law lecturer Dr Giannoulopoulos appeared on the daily news TV programme Arise News, commenting on the questioning and investigation of former French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, for his suspected involvement in corruption, illegal use of political influence, and breach of the secrecy of a judicial investigation.

Dr Giannoulopoulos said that the former president’s interrogation had sent shockwaves through French society, seeing many vilify Sarkozy, whereas others – especially from the Right – had voiced support, raising serious concerns about the independence of the judiciary, and the role senior prosecutors had played in targeting Sarkozy.

The lecturer explained that these developments had struck a blow to Sarkozy’s chances of a political come-back in the 2017 presidential election – because of the stigma of custodial interrogation (the garde à vue) and the opening of a judicial examination, but also because of the complexity, and anticipated length, of the process.

There would be a maximum three levels of jurisdiction and, depending on outcomes, a possibility to appeal, for both Sarkozy and the prosecution, which meant it could be very long before Sarkozy were ‘permitted’, if at all, to go back into politics.

Dr Giannoulopoulos concluded by outlining the serious charges Sarkozy faces if found guilty: 10 years imprisonment and €1,000,000 fine for corruption; 5 years imprisonment and €500,000 for the illegal use of political influence; while, importantly, a conviction could strip Sarkozy of his political rights.
Comedy Studies is Beyond a Joke

Brunel’s Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR), an international research centre devoted to the academic study of comedy, has been busy making itself known, and disseminating its research.

Concluding the series ‘Comedy Matters’ for this academic year, a seminar was held on 11 June featuring papers about the social role of satire in Australia, Japan and China by leading comedy academics.

Organised by CCSR, the Live at Brunel comedy night brought an eclectic selection of talented comedians together to literally and figuratively rock the boat – the Tattershall Castle Boat – filled with Brunel staff and members of the public.

The line-up drew upon a range of comic and performance styles, including: the dysfunctional cabaret of La Voix; the surreal slapstick of Steve Best; Robin Ince’s politically-charged observational and satirical mode; and Joy Carter’s heart-felt, personal approach, drawing upon her experiences as an adoption campaigner. Headliner Brunel Honorary Graduate Jo Brand lightly teased elements of life at Brunel, claiming that she attended the University so long ago that she “actually knew” the University’s namesake Isambard Kingdom Brunel himself, and drawing a huge response from the Brunel community who were present.

Finally, the Director of CCSR Dr Sharon Lockyer was awarded a £1,500 funding grant for an event as part of the Being Human conference, the UK’s first national festival of the humanities. As Dr Lockyer explains: ‘Our event Feeling Funny/Being Human: What can humour tell us about “being human”? will explore the interesting and dynamic relationships between humour, humans and non-humans.

Dr Lockyer’s grant is one of 36 that the festival organisers have awarded to universities and arts and cultural organisations across the UK to participate in the nine days of festival, 15-23 November, 2014.

The festival programme will focus on activities that make humanities research accessible to the general public and demonstrate the role of the humanities in the cultural, intellectual, political and social life of the UK.

To find out more, please visit the festival site or follow the festival on Twitter @BeingHumanFest.

Busy time for Brunel Business School

Academics from different parts of the world attended a hat-trick of conferences at BBS this summer.

The first was a successful meeting of minds at the multi-disciplinary symposium, Health, Innovation and Technology on June 13, organised by BBS lecturer Dr Raffaella Valsecchi, a member of the Work and Organisation Research Centre. Dr Valsecchi disseminated the findings of her Knowledge Transfer Leave: “New Developments in the Delivery of Occupational Health Services to Small Firms: the Case of ‘The Health for Work Adviceline’” (Dr. R. Valsecchi, Professor N. Anderson, Dr. M. Balta and Professor J. Harrison).

This research highlighted the importance of providing alternative ways of delivering Occupational Health services across small businesses. From this research it has been found that this innovative service develops OH knowledge and awareness among the managers in small business.

About 60 people attended the 4th Brunel Accounting Symposium on June 20, organised by Dr Jill Collis, Reader in Accounting, which promoted discussion on contemporary issues in accounting, to provide continuing professional development, and to foster relationships with the accountancy profession, regulators and standard setters.

Finally, the lively annual international conference eLearning 2.0 on July 23, organised by Dr Chris Evans, BBS senior lecturer, explored technology-enhanced learning and social media technologies including Wikis, and massive open online courses (commonly known as MOOCS).

The keynote speakers were Peter Bryant, London School of Economics and Political Science, and John Carter McKnight, Lancaster University.
Brunel’s award-winning Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) aims to give expert advice and support to all disabled students, so that they can fulfil their potential to become confident, talented and versatile graduates. Founded in 1999, the DDS won the Times Higher Award for Outstanding Support for Disabled Students in 2008 and, since then, the service continues to be considered an exemplar by other disability services in the UK. Express goes behind the scenes to meet the team.

Based on the top floor of the Bannerman Centre, Louise Baddeley is the current Operations Manager of the 15 person DDS team, currently providing maternity cover for Gill Beech.

The department supports students with a wide range of disabilities including specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and AD(H)D, Asperger syndrome, medical conditions, mental health conditions, mobility and sensory impairments.

Louise explains that, “as well as working with students, the service’s specialist advisers work closely with College staff advising them on how best to support disabled students and the reasonable adjustments they can make.”

Opened in 2004, another key DDS service is the Assistive Technology Centre (ATC), which, equipped with a large range of assistive technology and equipment, provides a quiet area for disabled students to work in the Bannerman Centre.

A large number of courses now incorporate a placement year and students are increasingly encouraged to take up this opportunity. For disabled students this can give rise to a number of challenges. DDS Advisers work closely with students and Placement Officers to ensure they receive guidance on whether they should disclose their disability and how to negotiate support in the workplace.

There are other services provided by the DDS that include:

- A personalised induction event and a social group throughout the academic year for students with Asperger syndrome.
- A screening service and assessment service for students who think they may be dyslexic.

On the subject of mental health, Louise explains that “students with mental health conditions who have contacted the service have sometimes said that they were not aware that they would be eligible for support from the DDS.

“Despite this the number of students disclosing mental health conditions has risen significantly (27% in the last year). We have also seen a sharp
Did you know that...?

- The DDS registered 1532 students during 2013/14
- That’s over 11% of Brunel’s student population with a disclosed disability
- Significant funding has been invested in our campus to make it fully accessible
- The DDS runs staff development sessions on a range of disability-related topics
- The DDS also provides support for students with mental health issues
- The DDS gets involved with a wide range of campus activities, including Freshers’ week, One World Week, graduation ceremonies and open days
- For students with Asperger syndrome the DDS organises a fortnightly social group and a transition event at the start of the new academic year
- The DDS also provides an information-and-advice service to disabled staff

increase in the number of students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) (14% in the last year and over 100% in the last two years).”

Unfortunately the DDS is facing huge challenges, alongside all other disability services in the UK, as Louise outlines. “Changes to the Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) [due to be implemented in 2015/16] will reduce the amount of government funding available to disabled students quite significantly. This places a huge amount of pressure on HEIs to find ways of continuing to support disabled students.

“Despite this the DDS is committed to providing a high quality service and welcomes enquiries from all staff, students and applicants.”
Trudi Hale, Support Worker Co-ordinator

“I’ve worked with disabled students for over 20 years. Previously I was Learning Support Assistant Co-Ordinator at Uxbridge College, and I have a teaching qualification.

“It’s my job to employ and manage the individuals who give support to our disabled students – support workers, notetakers, readers, amanuenses (scribes), and study assistants. I employ about 30 support workers at the moment, running the support workers’ course once a year that’s accredited by the Open College Network.

“A variety of people are drawn to the work because it’s flexible and (hopefully) satisfying. I employ lots of students – they’re good because they understand how the University works – but I also employ mums, for example, who enjoy the summer holidays.

“Today, I invoiced the local authorities, emailed companies we work with to inform them that Brunel is changing its branding, and did some data inputting (which is dead boring!)

“The best bit is working with the students – there’s lots of characters! We’re a friendly department – I think we make students feel comfortable coming to talk to us. We always fix their problems, whatever they are.

“The challenging aspect is organising timetables for support workers. I’ll do them perfectly but then students may change modules, for example.

“I have lots of kids, chickens and dogs. I try to ward off old age by going out clubbing!”

Alastair Veal, Assistive Technology Adviser

“Since 2006 I’ve trained disabled students and maintained the equipment that they use to access learning – it’s a technical and a social job.

“We look after about 1,500 items in the ATC and across campus, including software such as Read and Write mostly for dyslexic students or Jaws for blind students. We’ve bought a lot more specialist chairs recently, as students felt there needed to more around campus. Lots of apps are available for disabled students – I advise them what’s out there that might help.

“In term-time the focus is on training – for example we had a student with ADHD who kept losing concentration when reading; now they use software to read them their notes from PDFs or E-books. In the summer, I maintain the facilities – scanners, cables, software, updating the website, etc. Today, I investigated loaning a laptop to a student, we had some chairs delivered – a DIY job! – and there’s a student coming to learn about mind-mapping software.

“Assistive Technology helps people to work more independently and efficiently – that’s the most satisfying part. Getting the computers set up is nightmarishly complicated – you would never normally need a system that caters for all disabilities!

“Outside of work I do a lot of outdoor sports – hiking, running, mountain biking, kayaking – and I study Japanese.”

“Assistive Technology helps people to work more independently and efficiently – that’s the most satisfying part.”
Emily Chevalier, Dyslexia Adviser

“As one of three Dyslexia Advisers, I support students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. Soon we’ll be redefined as Disability Advisers, supporting students with any disability, including mental health conditions and Asperger Syndrome.

“I advise SpLD students on available support, screen/assess students who think they might have an SpLD, and provide one-to-one specialist study skills support. I’m also a liaison between staff and students within academic departments and other Student Services.

“I’ve been involved in the Disability Link Up Scheme for 3 years, matching current disabled students with others new to Brunel to offer support – now incorporated into a wider Brunel Buddy Scheme.

“It’s satisfying when I hear a student has done well on their course and our support’s been instrumental in their success. The challenging aspect of the role is explaining why a student’s support adjustments aren’t reasonable or would not be implemented.

“My job is rewarding – every day I feel I’m making a difference in the world. The support and advice I provide for students sets them on their way to future success and enables them to pursue what they want to achieve.

“I enjoy live music, dancing, and growing (and eating!) vegetables.”

Debbie Dyson, Office Co-ordinator

“Generally, I’m responsible for the day-to-day running of the WLAC and the DDS office, also supporting the Manager on financial, organisational, and audit matters. I organise the Assessors, IT Trainers, and the Outreach Centres, making sure we have the capacity for students, and discussing positive changes.

“I am the lead on: finance, discussing budget forecasting with Martin the WLAC Manager; WLAC Oracle, the database that the WLAC/DDS use to store all students’ information; and on the R2P Financial system.

“On an average day I spend time at the front-of-house taking telephone calls, responding to emails, and talking to students, before going into my office to do administrative tasks. Yesterday I was organising a WLAC Training Event, and taking financial queries about Term 2 invoices.

“It’s satisfying knowing that you’re helping students achieve their degree, providing them with a comfortable place to visit, and making them feel valued. It’s so nice to see their progress – some keep in contact, letting us know they’ve gone on to further study or their desired career.

“Managing the daily workload can be challenging, as are the challenges we face dealing with the individual students and their disabilities.

“Outside of work, I spend time with my husband, two children and dog – going to parks, maybe to the beach or a museum.”
THE GALLERY

These are a selection of the best photos taken by our students, staff and alumni. We’re always pleased to see your photos, so if you would like Brunel University London to consider them for publications and digital use please follow us on Instagram and tag your images with #brunel or #bruneluni. Alternatively you can email your high resolution photos (ideally 1MB+) to communications@brunel.ac.uk