



Bulletin

March 2006 • issue 34

Queen Mary, University of London's newsletter for staff and students

Principal's Open Meeting: Wednesday 22 March 2006

Last term saw the first in a new series of Open Meetings at Queen Mary – an opportunity for all staff to voice their views on issues of importance to them and to the College.

The meeting was a great success, with almost 300 staff attending and additional questions submitted online. Feedback from across the College has been overwhelmingly positive.

As a further measure to improve communication with staff, the next Open Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 22 March 2006. Two meetings will also take place for the School of Medicine and Dentistry on 10 and 12 April 2006 (in Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square).

This term, the agenda will cover the College's new Strategic Plan, the National Pay Framework, and the RAE 2008, including presentations from the Principal, Professor Adrian Smith; Human Resources Director Naomi Holloway; and RAE Director, Professor Trevor Dadson.

Following the range of questions submitted for the previous meeting, the senior management team will also be inviting staff to suggest additional items for the agenda, so that you can shape the topics under discussion; as with the first meeting, the floor will then be open to staff to voice queries in person on the day.

This is another key opportunity for senior management to find out more about the issues you feel are most important to the future of Queen Mary, and get your feedback on the College's plans for the future.

Staff should have received a formal invitation in the post within the last few weeks. In the meantime if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Kate Hunter, Head of Communications (Corporate), visit the Office of the Principal intranet pages at: <http://qm-web.qmul.ac.uk/principal/messages/open.html>, or email openmeeting@qmul.ac.uk for more information.



Staff enjoy lunch before the last open meeting

Staff Open Meetings

Wed 22 March, 1pm Skeel Lecture Theatre, Mile End
Principal Professor Adrian Smith, HR Director Naomi Holloway, RAE Director Professor Trevor Dadson and members of the Principal's Steering Group will be in attendance

School of Medicine and Dentistry

Mon 10 April, 12 noon Perrin Lecture Theatre, Whitechapel

Wed 12 April, 12 noon Willoughby Lecture Theatre, Charterhouse Square

Warden, Professor Sir Nicholas Wright and Chief Operating Officer for the School, Peter Davies

SPECIAL FEATURE IN THIS ISSUE

- CENTRE FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY GETS TO WORK
- LAUNCH OF THE CENTRE FOR ANGLO-GERMAN CULTURAL RELATIONS



Queen Mary
University of London

Annual staff presentation – College celebrates staff achievements

On 6 December scores of staff gathered in the Senior Common Room at Mile End for the annual staff presentations. Each year Principal Professor Adrian Smith presents staff with certificates for various achievements and Drapers' Prizes for outstanding contribution to the College and developments in teaching and learning.

The Principal was particularly pleased to present the Drapers' Prizes for Outstanding Service to the College. He said: "When I came to the College seven years ago I was shocked that there were all sorts of prizes for academic staff but no prizes for other staff. These prizes acknowledge that we are only successful because we are in it together, in other words, because of the combined efforts of all out staff."

The Principal then presented three prizes to the CCRS SCR Team, to John Paterson and to John Dupuy.



(l-r) The SCR team of Herleen Rickie, Vera Payne and Maureen Newman with John Paterson and John Dupuy.



(l-r) Paula Funnell, Mandeep Khela and Ireny Salama received certificates for completing a course in Advanced Presentation Skills.



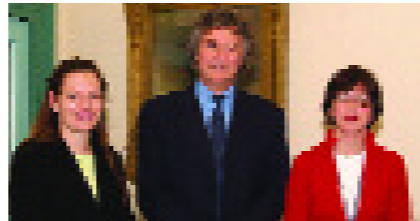
(l-r) Shelly Donaghy, David Dellow, Karen McDowell, Mark Scotlock and Catherine Burden collected certificates in Supervisory Management.



(l-r) Sheena Read, Anam Hoque, Sasha Rockhead, Tracey Paradise, Lauren Hall, Joanne Mitchell, Heather Toulson and Dawn Hawkins all received certificates in Administrative Support.



Colleagues from UCL and QM collected certificates for completing the Professional Development Programme for University Administrators: (l-r) Lynette Hothi (UCL), Dave Langdon (UCL), Fatema Leitao (UCL), Carmen van den Bogaard (QM), Bill White (QM), Cheryl Measures (QM) and Monika Nangia (QM).



(l-r) Dr Fiona Clarke and Maria Glanton received certificates in Learning and Teaching (CILT). Dr Clarke was the first colleague from the Institute of Dentistry to complete the course.

(l-r) Dr Jeanette Naish and Professor Franco Vivaldi were awarded Drapers' Prizes for Developments in Teaching and Learning. Dr Emma Bell, the third winner was not able to attend. (Please see pages 3 - 5 of this issue of *Bulletin* for an overview of their winning projects).



Drapers' Prizes for development and innovation in teaching and learning

Each of the three academic sectors in the College were represented in the 2005 Drapers' Prizes for teaching and learning. Each of the projects is profiled over the next three pages.

Promoting health through play – Teddy Bear Hospital at the School of Medicine and Dentistry

Dr Jeanette Naish, Professor Elizabeth Davenport, Emma Dunne, Rebecca Coates, Carmen Eynon-Soto and Suzanne Pomfret.

Teddy Bear Hospital at the School of Medicine and Dentistry is a community based public health project run by medical students, working with children aged three to seven in schools in Tower Hamlets. The aim is to help primary school children to overcome their fears and anxieties about doctors and hospitals, and to understand some basic concepts about health – for example hand washing. Each child brings their special toy to a Teddy Bear clinic or workshop for examination by a Teddy Bear doctor; the student 'doctor' will then ask the child questions about their sick toy and make a diagnosis. In the past year nine schools have hosted Teddy Bear Hospitals, and Teddy Bear doctors have worked with nearly nine hundred children.

Teddy Bear Hospital is an international project that takes place in many countries around the world but the Medical School's Teddy Bear Hospital is unique for two reasons. Most medical schools run Teddy Bear Hospitals as one-off events but Queen Mary's Teddy

Bear Hospital clinics and workshops are not only run regularly by medical students for local children in collaboration with local schools but is part of the undergraduate curriculum as a Special Study Module in the second, fourth and fifth years.

Teddy Bear Hospital enables the students who participate to learn about child development, particularly language and behaviour in the context of understanding how to communicate with young children, the communities in which they work, and the ethical and legal issues related to child health. Students find being a Teddy Bear doctor or dentist invaluable experience, helping them understand how kids relate to doctors and dentists and improving the students' communication skills and appreciation of cultural and socio economic factors.

Being a Teddy Bear doctor can be revealing: some of the ailments the children say their teddy bears have are quite shocking, for example violent

injuries and TB. The Teddy Bear Hospital gives the students valuable exposure to the patterns of illness which are common in the local community around the College, the determinants of health and the principles of health education.

Teddy Bear Hospital provides a safe environment for both the students and children to learn – the students about working with children and the children about visiting the doctor or dentist. Tutors from the Medical and Dental School are on hand to support the students and the children's teachers are on hand if a child becomes distressed. Another benefit of the environment is that it gives students important experience of working in a team with other students, teachers and play specialists.

All in all students find Teddy Bear Hospital a valuable experience – it even inspires some students to go into paediatrics.



(Left to right) Emma Dunne, President, Teddy Bear Hospital, 4th year MBBS, Rebecca Coates, Vice President Teddy Bear Hospital, 4th year MBBS, Dr Jeanette Naish, Senior Lecturer, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, Suzanne Pomfret, former Vice President, Teddy Bear Hospital, 4th year MBBS and Carmen Eynon-Soto, former President, Teddy Bear Hospital, intercalated BMedSci

Teaching Critical Thinking to Business and Management Undergraduates: Dr Emma Bell

A third year undergraduate module in Business Management devised by Dr Emma Bell from the School of Business and Management won a Drapers' Prize.

The module encourages students to be critical of the assumptions underpinning management education, including the status of management knowledge and practice. It highlights issues of power, the relationship of organisations to communities and environment, race, culture, gender, and ethics.

Dr Bell's display at the Drapers' exhibition incorporated examples of students' assessed work including learning diaries and portfolios of evidence, which are designed to encourage students to reflect on the learning process, and a film made by some of them highlighting issues raised by the Enron accounting scandal in 2001.

Dr Bell explained: "The course is about challenging the received wisdom of textbook versions of management knowledge. In the first two years of the course students are introduced to the foundations of management thought in areas such as strategy and marketing but these ideas are taught very separately. In this course we try to bring common issues together, and ask the students to integrate them. We also analyse the concept of management, asking whether management thought has helped us to build better organisations, an issue which is particularly resonant at the moment. The original aim of business schools was that through research we would come up with solutions to management problems and create more effective managers. The course involves the students in the debate about whether management knowledge does in fact do that.

"Another key part of the course is that it encourages students to reflect on what they can do post-graduation, and the skills and careers they can develop. Ten per cent of all UK undergraduates have a business and management component to their degree and so it is

important that our students doing a course that is entirely business and management oriented think about the subject area in more depth and consider what makes their degree different. Through the course they are encouraged to reflect on what they have done, what they think is important and how they will apply that in employment."

Dr Bell teaches the course alone and expanding student numbers year on year will present challenges as the course relies on a good student-lecturer ratio. There is very little lecture based teaching on the course; most of the course takes place in groups of 20 students – either group work or structured reading groups. Assessing the course is also challenging: there is no exam and carrying out group assessment for 90 students is not easy.



Dr Emma Bell

Dr Bell was delighted to win the Drapers' Prize: "My main reason for entering was to let other areas of the College know what we are doing in the School of Business and Management and challenge some of the stereotypes – critical thinking is something we do in a range of courses in Business and Management.

"I would like to use the prize money to keep track of some of our undergraduates. We have only had one cohort graduate from the course and so I am exploring the possibility of keeping in touch with them as they go into the workplace, which sits well with ethos of the course. By maintaining the relationship with our graduates I hope to keep their educational process relevant and perhaps involve them in some activities with undergraduates in future cohorts."

Essential Mathematics: Professor Franco Vivaldi

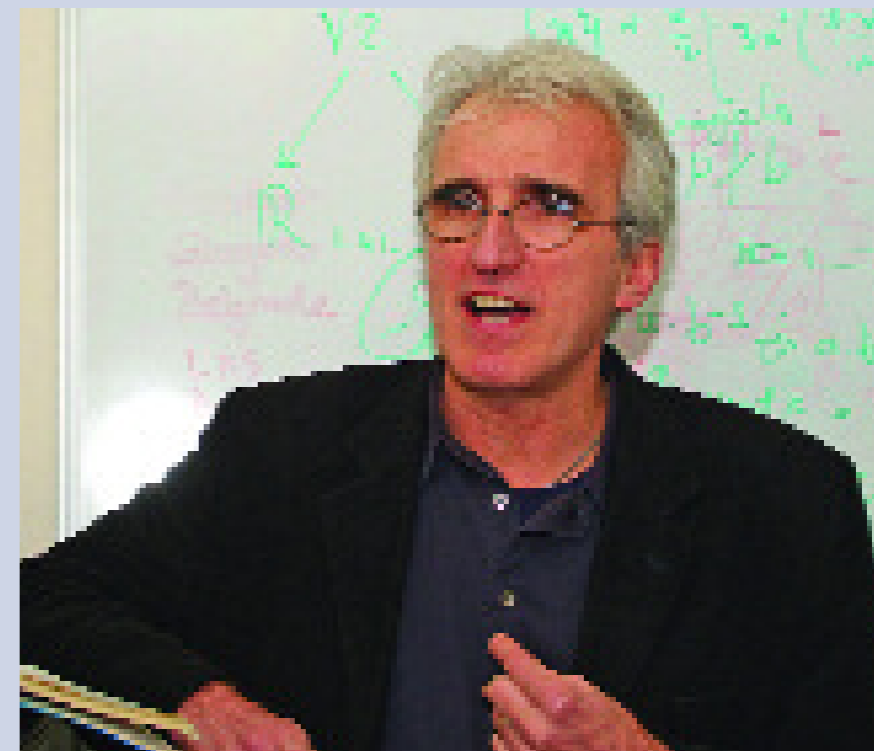
Essential Mathematics (EM) is a course all first year undergraduate Mathematics students must take and pass to progress to the second year of their degree. It is now in its fifth year, and has successfully addressed a very difficult problem: an alarming number of maths students reach university without basic skills in elementary arithmetic and algebra.

EM is unique in its assessment philosophy and methods, and in its quality assurance. Rather than a single exam at the end of the year, students have seven opportunities to attempt the EM exam during their first year. The minimal standards are sharply defined and uncompromising: the examination format is multiple-choice, and students must answer 80 per cent of the questions correctly to pass.

Quality assurance is based on openness rather certification: the students find out their marks before they even leave the exam room, and keep a copy of their submission. Past exam papers are available on-line, together with their solutions: students and indeed external observers (for example the external examiner) can monitor standards and have access to the exam statistics. All teaching material is also available on-line.

And EM boasts remarkable results. While, on average, 90 per cent of the students fail the first EM exam at the beginning of the first year, eventually over 90 per cent pass. Since the introduction of EM, improvements in students' performance in other courses been noted, for example in Calculus.

EM takes a very unusual approach. Tutors prepare the students for the fact that most of them will fail the EM exam the first time. Failing is not stigmatised: the educational message is that there is a gap in secondary school maths teaching, which is not the students' fault, but which is something that the students and teachers are going to work hard together to fix. Finding out their result at the end of the two hour exam also makes the course very unusual, and creates an aura about it which is unlike other courses the students take. One unusual significant factor of EM is that some students,



Professor Franco Vivaldi

having passed the exam, sit it again to see if they can do better. On one occasion, ten per cent of the students sitting an EM exam had already passed; on another, a second year student took the exam again to make sure he was still maths fit!

Professor Vivaldi commented: "I was delighted to win a Drapers' Prize – I hope it will bring the issue to a wider audience". The prize is the culmination of much effort - it has taken eight years for EM to get to this point, from first noticing a deficiency in students' education, to implementing a successful solution. One issue was selling the idea of zero tolerance: students who do not pass EM do not progress to the second year. While those who do not pass EM have almost invariably serious deficiencies in other areas, every year there are usually one or two students who do not progress because of EM alone.

But Professor Vivaldi has a very motivating argument for setting this absolute standard: "These students will very possibly be the teachers of tomorrow. Would you be happy for your children or grandchildren to be taught by a Maths graduate who was uncomfortable with fractions or square roots? Professor Wilfrid Hodges, Director of Undergraduate Studies when the scheme was first implemented, really understood this issue, and gave his full support. Without him, EM would not have been possible."

Essential Maths is delivered by a team of dedicated colleagues from the School of Mathematical Sciences and the College's Widening Participation Team.

Virginia Davis takes over as Chair of Equal Opportunities Committee

Dr Virginia Davis of the Department of History has agreed to take over the role of Chair of the College's Equal Opportunities Committee. Her first duty will be as Chair of the next meeting in February. Dr Davis is on sabbatical from her role as Head of the Department of History this year but will take up the post again in September.

Principal Professor Adrian Smith invited Dr Davis to take on the role. She explained why she agreed: "I am interested in equal opportunities as an issue - as Head of Department you see lots of aspects of equal opportunities. This seemed like an interesting if rather difficult job and so I accepted."

"The role will be challenging. We have a hugely diverse student body; this must be one of the most diverse campuses in the country. But the College has good foundations because of its heritage - Westfield was founded to educate women in the 1880s and the College is heavily involved in working in the communities of east London to widen participation - and we are very committed to equality.

"There are two big pieces of work for the committee and the College in terms of equal opportunities in the next year. The first is that HEFCE has devolved

responsibility to institutions for developing codes of practice relating to submissions for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The second is that over the coming months we have to carry out an impact assessment of all aspects of the College's policies to make sure that none of them put any groups at a disadvantage. This will be quite challenging because everything will have to be looked at, not just at a College level, but a departmental one too."

"The committee is made up of staff and students from all over the College and so is very representative which is great. I think equal opportunities are enormously important and hope to bring these issues to colleagues' attention increasingly while I am Chair."



Ebroul Izquierdo and Innovation and Enterprise do a deal with Motorola

Professor Ebroul Izquierdo from the Department of Electronic Engineering has been working with Innovation and Enterprise to finalise a deal with mobile phone giant Motorola. Professor Izquierdo has been working on a collaborative project with the company in which Motorola owns the majority of the intellectual property.

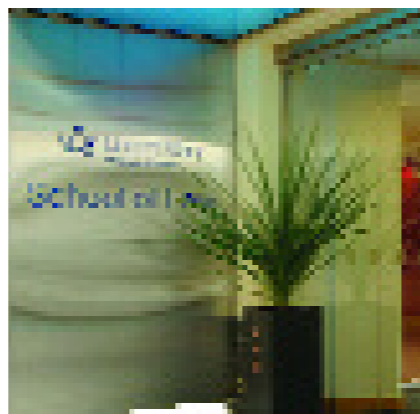
As the majority owners, Motorola have bought and filed the patent for the research. The collaborative nature of the project has benefits for the academic - it meant Professor Izquierdo could focus on his research. Manyi Cristofoli from Innovation and

Enterprise urges academics to consider commercialising their research. She said: "If you have a good idea, please come to Innovation and Enterprise and we will see how we can protect it and commercialise it. Any income generated will contribute to Queen Mary's Research Assessment Exercise submission. Doing deals with industry is not that difficult - colleagues should not be put off."

If you have an idea or would like to find out more please contact Manyi at: m.cristofoli@qmul.ac.uk

John Yelland retires

Professor John Yelland has retired from the Department of Law. Friends and colleagues marked the occasion on 17 November in the Laws building reception. Professor Yelland was Admissions Tutor for the Department of Law and a former Head of Department. His research interests include commercial law; law of credit and secured transactions; and insolvency law. He also co-authored the practitioner loose-leaf work *Gore-Browne on Companies*.



Appointment of Deputy Warden, School of Medicine and Dentistry, and Vice-Principal (NHS Liaison)



Professor Raymond Playford, FRCP, FMedSci, Professor of Gastroenterology, Imperial College School of Medicine, has been appointed to the post of Deputy Warden and Vice-Principal (NHS Liaison).

Professor Playford will take up his Deputy Warden and VP duties on 1 April 2006 for a four year term in the first instance. An interview with Professor Playford will be published in *Bulletin* later this year. There will be an opportunity to meet Professor Playford at the School of Medicine and Dentistry's Open Meetings in April.

Len Doyal retires after 15 years

Len Doyal has retired after 15 years at Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry. Len Doyal was Professor of Medical Ethics in the Institute of Health Sciences Education.

Professor Doyal began his academic career teaching the philosophy of science and technology and moral and political philosophy, and did not develop an interest in ethics and law applied to medicine until the early 1980s. He began by organising and jointly teaching one of the first programmes in this area ever to be formally examined and timetabled in a medical school in Britain. He also published papers about ethico-legal issues in medicine and in 1988 was given a grant by the Nuffield Foundation to write, direct and produce a video library and associated teaching package on informed consent. This was published in 1990 and is still being used to teach medical ethics in medical schools in the UK and abroad.

In 1990 Len Doyal was appointed Senior Lecturer in Medical Ethics and made Reader in 1994. In 1996 he was promoted to Professor of Medical Ethics and developed the academic programme 'Ethics and Law Applied to Medicine and Dentistry'. It remains probably the most extensive in the UK and has been praised by the General Medical Council and the General Dental Council for the way in which it integrates ethics and law within the clinical curriculum. In 2000, he won the Drapers' Prize for Excellence in Teaching and was made a Licensed Practitioner within the Higher Education Academy.

Professor Doyal lectures, writes and consults widely. His book, *A Theory of Human Need* with Ian Gough won two international prizes.

Until his retirement, Professor Doyal was an Honorary Consultant to the Royal Hospitals Trust - one of the few

positions of its kind in the UK - and provided advice about ethical and legal matters for a wide variety of clinicians, especially in east London.

Professor Doyal said: "My work in the School of Medicine and Dentistry has been the most exciting and rewarding of my career. I would like to thank colleagues within the School, Trust and College for all of the advice, support and encouragement that I have been given during my time here. In the process, I have been able to learn more than I thought possible. Hopefully, I have also been able to help to improve the quality of medical and dental education and professional practice - both here and elsewhere. In short, I consider myself to be a very lucky man!" Professor Doyal will continue as an Emeritus Professor at the School.

Principal chairs major cross-party review of crime statistics

A major cross-party review of how crime statistics are compiled and communicated in England and Wales is being chaired by the Principal. The review, intended to increase public understanding of crime figures, was announced on 26 January by the Home Secretary, Charles Clarke.

It is being undertaken by a group independent from the Home Office including opposition party nominees, leading statisticians and criminologists, and media representatives. They are tasked with making recommendations to the Home Secretary on how to provide a measure of crime that is clear and comprehensive, and that will be trusted by the public.

The review's announcement coincided with publication of the quarterly crime statistics to September 2005. According to the British Crime Survey (BCS), overall crime and violence are stable whilst vehicle crime and burglary are falling. The BCS is generally accepted as the most authoritative and

reliable indicator of crime trends and has measured people's experiences of crime in the same way for over 20 years.

Mr Clarke said: "I have been concerned for some time that Home Office crime statistics have been questioned and challenged. This has got to the point that most people seem confused about what is happening to crime in this country. This is why I have established an independent cross party group of experts to look at this issue. I have asked the group to feel free to advise me in whatever way they feel appropriate to help us increase public confidence in our measures of crime.

"Despite the fact that most crime categories are falling, fear of crime is still too high and public perception is often at odds with reality. That is why we need to look again at the statistics and find out why people do not believe them. I want to get to a situation, on a cross-party basis, where we all agree on how crime in this country is going to be

measured and are assured that the statistics are produced in an independent way that commands public credibility."

Professor Smith said: "This is an important initiative on the part of the Home Secretary and provides us with an opportunity to restore public trust in the accuracy and integrity of crime statistics."



Queen Mary introduces a new test for undergraduate medical and dental applicants

Twenty-four UK medical and dental Schools have come together to commission and develop a new UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) to select students for medical and dental degrees. The new test will help discriminate between highly qualified applicants for places at medical and dental schools and encourage students from a wide variety of backgrounds to consider these professions.

Applications from appropriate and highly qualified candidates have increased year on year and schools are finding it increasingly difficult to discriminate between applicants with similar A-level grades. Medical schools wish to select applicants by judging their potential as well as looking at their academic records and assess whether they have the right skills and qualities for careers in medicine and dentistry. UKCAT will provide additional information to allow the medical schools to look beyond formal examination results in a fair, consistent and transparent way which aims to work towards accounting for factors that may have prevented some talented candidates from reaching their full potential.

Chairman of the UKCAT Consortium, Professor Ian Johnson of the University of Nottingham, said: "A-level grades are good as indicators of academic performance, but academic excellence is not the only attribute desirable in future doctors and dentists. As a consequence, some other fair way of identifying potential - which incorporates assessment of mental abilities and other qualities - is required.

"We believe that the introduction of this new system will lead to a fairer and more easily understood selection process, widening access and ensuring tomorrow's doctors and dentists are not just academically able but possess the other skills vital for success."

Professor Chris Fowler, Dean for Education at Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry added "UKCAT

will be very student friendly as it is on-line and no special revision is required. It tests aptitude and ability rather than exam achievement and will encourage a broader range of applicants to Medicine and Dentistry."

Medical schools will be collecting and pooling data in an ongoing programme to discover the parts of the selection process that are particularly successful in identifying those students who will



make the very best doctors and dentists. Over time, this will allow further modification and improvement of the process.

Until now there have been a number of tests schools can ask applicants to take to help them select students but none of these tests address all of the areas medical and dental schools need assessed and none is proven in terms of long term outcomes - in other words selecting students who become successful doctors and dentists.

The 24 medical schools have therefore commissioned a test specifically designed to meet their needs. The first prospective medical and dental students will sit the test in the summer for entry in September 2007. UKCAT is online and so easy for students to sit and accessible to students based outside the UK. Students can use their results from the test to decide whether to apply for medicine or dentistry or not - taking the test does not commit them to applying but can help inform their decision.

This is the first time that such a large number of medical and dental schools have worked together in such a way and Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry is pleased to have been at the forefront of this collaboration.

Seventeen E-Learning fellowships announced under 2006 scheme

The College has established a scheme this year to support the development of e-learning across the disciplines. The scheme is funded from the HEFCE Capital Investment for E-Learning and is being administered by the College's new Distance and E-Learning Unit (see www.esd.qmul.ac.uk/elearning/).

Each Fellowship grant will be awarded to a member of staff for the development of e-learning and will

normally be up to £4,000 depending on requirements. The scheme is intended to be flexible and to encourage high quality e-learning that stems from sound educational principles. It is not prescriptive about particular software platforms or approaches.

Colleagues might use the money to:

- Buy in labour for design or content creation on an e-learning course

- Buy staff out of some duties to concentrate on their e-learning activity

- Purchase equipment or software needed for an e-learning project

The first round of E-Learning Fellowships have been awarded, and further rounds will follow. More details about the scheme can be found at www.esd.qmul.ac.uk/elearning/efs/.

The First E-Learning Fellowships of 2006

Dr Jan Broadway, Centre for Editing Lives and Letters

Project: Transcription Training and Testing System

Aim: To create an online system to assist students learning to transcribe manuscripts and examiners marking manuscripts.

Dr John Cater, Department of Engineering

Project: To establish the use of the Queen Mary Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support first year core Engineering courses.

Aim: This project aims to buy in labour for extension of existing Engineering course materials to the College VLE, WebCT and to establish support for online student learning and interaction.

Dr Andrea Cavallero, Department of Electronic Engineering

Project: Development and evaluation of lecture recording software for improving e-learning experience

Aim: To pilot in-house software which allows a camera automatically to track a lecturer's movements, thus facilitating the production of distance learning content without the costs that are often inherent in such production.

Dr Maurya Chandra, Department of Law

Project: Development of Department of Law Research Methods and Skills Web Course Tool

Aim: The project will consolidate and develop the current initiative in the

Department of Law to use WebCT for enriching research training and support.

Dr Paul Curzon, Department of Computer Science

Project: Using active cs4fn e-learning to bridge the School-University gulf

Aim: To develop educational, accessible, and fun active e-introductions to core topics of first year computer science modules linked to the cs4fn (Computer Science for Fun) project.

Dr Isobel Dundas, Institute of Health Sciences Education

Project: Development of a sleep medicine learning tool

Aim: To produce a DVD-based learning tool for describing and diagnosing sleep disordered breathing in children and young people

Professor Markman Ellis, School of English and Drama

Project: Citation On-Line Tutorial (COLT)

Aim: To develop an on-line tutorial to be used as a teaching aid in research methods training in English Studies and related humanities disciplines.

Dr Vicky Joliffe, Institute of Cell and Molecular Science

Project: Establishment of WebCT and e-learning Base for the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Dermatology.

Aim: To enable the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Dermatology to be

run as an e-learning web based distance learning course.

Dr Ania Korszun, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine

Project: Development of e-learning resource for mental status examination

Aim: To develop the use of video recordings of simulated psychiatric patients as an e-learning resource for teaching mental status examination. This will be made available on the web for the students as a self directed learning resource to enhance existing psychiatry teaching.

Dr Robin Maytum, School of Biological and Chemical Sciences

Project: Development of WebCT based e-learning materials for SBCS Enzyme Catalysis course

Aim: To develop a WebCT course area to complement an existing face-to-face course in Enzyme Catalysis.

Mr Roland Miller, School of Business and Management

Project: The Queen Mary Learning Link

Aim: To bridge existing communication gaps through multilingual web pages, supplemented with web casts of lectures and seminars and virtual teaching assistants.

The First E-Learning Fellowships of 2006 (cont)

Ms Margaret Percy, Learning Development Unit

Project: An e-moderated discussion board for the development of disciplinary writing (for business)

Aim: To set up, monitor, evaluate and disseminate a discussion board for the development of disciplinary writing on the pilot "Writing for Business" course (part of the Materials Department's MSc courses.)

Professor Chris Pountain, School of Modern Languages

Project: Aula Virtual Española (Spanish Virtual Classroom)

Aim: The enhancement of Spanish language teaching in the School of Modern Languages by the provision of on-line resources for staff reference and student self-access.

Dr Benjamin Roberts, Institute of Dentistry

Project: Using handheld computers to facilitate reflective learning in dental education

Aim: To trial the use of wireless handheld computers to use an electronic progress file in Dentistry.

Dr Peter Toon, Institute of Health Sciences Education

Project: Piloting the use of asynchronous conferencing for students and staff in Masters' programmes and other post-graduate groups.

Aim: To explore the role asynchronous virtual conferencing and other web-based learning tools can play in supporting students and staff on a part-time MSc in Primary Care.

Professor Evelyn Welch, School of English and Drama

Project: Supporting Enquiry-Led Learning in English

Aims: This project aims to work with students and a learning technologist to create a WebCT course package that will support enquiry-led learning on a large second-year English option, Ways of Looking. The programme aims to use WebCT to encourage new forms of learning and student interaction rather than simply replacing paper-based material with web-based resources.

Dr Guy Woodward, School of Biological and Chemical Sciences

Project: Creating an effective e-learning environment for Fish Biology courses in the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences

Aim: To create an electronic course of study in Fish Biology (BSc Undergraduate Level 2 Course) and An Introduction to Fish Ecology (MSc and Short Course), to complement lectures and practical classes, and ready the courses for distance learning delivery.

Come along to the inaugural Drapers' Lecture on Learning and Teaching



Professor du Sautoy is Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford

The College's first Drapers' Lecture on Learning and Teaching will be on the 29 March in the Perrin Lecture Theatre at Whitechapel. Professor Marcus du Sautoy, from Oxford University has been invited to give this inaugural lecture.

The Drapers' Lecture is an important new annual event in the College calendar. It is a development of the Queen Mary Lecture on Learning and Teaching, which has run for a number of years, but the Drapers' Company has now very generously agreed to sponsor the event. It is part of the Drapers' commitment to the teaching and learning activities in the College, and links with the Drapers' Prizes for Developments in Learning and Teaching and the Drapers' Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

The aim of the lecture is to stimulate discussion about learning and teaching and to highlight its importance to the College.

The lecture will be of interest to all staff, but of particular interest to those in the Science and Engineering sector. Professor du Sautoy is Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, and has a significant media profile as a promoter of mathematics

and science in the media and in schools. He has broadcast and published on prime numbers and the Riemann Hypothesis, as well as on cryptography and code making and breaking. He is passionate about the teaching of mathematics, in schools and in HE.

If you would like to attend you will need to book a place. All academic and academic-related staff should receive an invitation in February with details – please RSVP to events@qmul.ac.uk. There will be a reception beforehand to which all those who have booked for the lecture will be invited.

Student Bulletin

Queen Mary alumnus returns as a BrainAcademy winner

The winner of Queen Mary's Postgraduate BrainAcademy competition for 2005 is an alumnus of Queen Mary, who is set to return to study at the College after 20 years away.

Simon Kinsey originally graduated from the College with a First in Maths in 1984. After a varied career as a community health officer, manager of homelessness services, teaching mathematics and most recently as a Data Analyst with Anglian Water, Simon decided to enter BrainAcademy, which for the first time was offering a place on a postgraduate programme.

From the thousands of entries to the Internet quiz stage more than 370 people made it through to the second round of the competition. Only 14 then made it to the final stages. These involved an open-ended programming challenge related to artificial life and emotional computing followed by, for the very best, a wide-ranging interview.

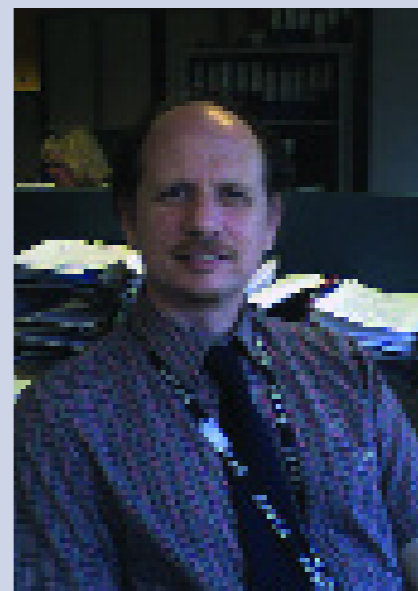
Simon created an artificial life program, where a goldfish had to search for food in its virtual environment. The judges were impressed by the humour in the animation, as well as the technical competence of the programming. Simon also demonstrated a deep knowledge of all the areas touched upon in the interview; not only of science and technology, but also its impact on society, impressing the judges enormously.

Simon wins a place to study on Queen Mary's MSc in Advanced Methods in Computer Science in the Department of Computer Science, as well as BCS HCI membership for 2007.

Commenting on his win, Simon said: "I am absolutely delighted to be offered this prize, and accept wholeheartedly. Needless to say, I am very happy to be studying again at Queen Mary – albeit after a minor 20 year break."

BrainAcademy coordinator and judge, Dr Paul Curzon said that the panel was so impressed with Simon's entry and interview performance that they decided to offer him a full bursary to support his Masters studies. He explained: "Simon is an ideal winner. We hoped that this year's BrainAcademy would encourage people to think about how returning to higher education could enhance their career. For Simon it will allow him not only to build upon his already extensive knowledge of current technology but also be ready for the future; understanding the technology that is currently in the melting pot of the research community." On completing his Masters he is looking to move into a software development related career.

The competition is sponsored by Queen Mary, and by the information technology industry, including Microsoft. The British Computer



BrainAcademy 2005 winner and QM alumnus, Simon Kinsey

Society Human Computer Interaction Group and BAFTA winners Soda Creative Ltd (<http://www.soda.co.uk/>) also supported this year's competition.

BrainAcademy was first launched in 2003 and continues to grow year on year. The fun 'life-changing-prizes-game-show' caught the imagination with the site amassing some 80,000 hits in its first year alone; the government's Minister for e-Commerce commended it, and the competition won Queen Mary's Drapers' Prize for teaching and learning.

The competition is just one way in which Queen Mary is demonstrating its commitment to widening access to higher education. As well as undergraduate and postgraduate awards, the 2006 competition will include prizes for younger pre A-level students, as an extension of the College's outreach activities promoting computer science within schools. It will be sponsored by cs4fn (www.dcs.qmul.ac.uk/cs4fn): the webzine on the fun side of computer science.

Visit www.brainacademy.qmul.ac.uk or www.dcs.qmul.ac.uk/cs4fn for more details.



Key research area befits new Centre

School for Business and Management launches the Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity

Last year the School of Business and Management saw the birth of a new and unique centre – the Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity (CRED). The CRED is the latest development in an impressive period of progress for the School, which includes the transformation from the Centre of Business Management to the School of Business and Management at the beginning of this academic year. An important part of this transformation has been the recruiting of a number of leading academics and the identification of four key research areas, one of which is equality and diversity.

Professor Geraldine Healy is Director of the Centre for Equality and Diversity Research. She explained: “CRED fits with our location in the East End which is famous for its diversity – past, present, and future. Making equality and diversity one of the School’s research pillars makes Queen Mary unique. This distinctive focus has attracted leading academics in the field.”

One such academic and part of the new Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity is Professor Mike Noon who comes to Queen Mary from De Montfort University. He explained: “My main research interest is around equality and diversity. While most business schools do work in equality and diversity, I don’t know of any other business school that has made equality and diversity one of its central offerings in terms of teaching and research. It makes a refreshing change for my research to be central.”

As the Centre’s Director, Professor Healy has high hopes for CRED. “I want Queen Mary to be an institution of choice for both research and learning in equality and diversity,” she explained. “We already have a number of research projects underway and have benefited from a number of grants awarded by UK and European bodies. We are building strong alliances with

UK and international universities including the Universities of Bristol, Nottingham, Warwick, Cornell (USA), Tohoku (Japan), and a number of other European universities. Two full-time research fellows (funded by the European Social Fund) work in the Centre, which also has six PhD research students working on a wide range of equality and diversity projects.

“Already CRED is at the leading edge of equality and diversity research nationally and internationally. The academics that make up the Centre publish widely in leading journals, books and other media and together combine both an unusual breadth and a critical approach to researching equality and diversity. The Centre leads two key equality networks and in 2005-6 members are editing three special editions of international journals on equality issues.

“I see the Centre as a fairly open concept with a primary research focus but also fitting in with other areas of expertise in the School – I want it to be very inclusive. For some equality and diversity may be their main field of research, whereas for others, it may

form one aspect of a wider research agenda. We are also keen to involve experts in the field from different disciplines both at Queen Mary and elsewhere. We seek to build a centre of academic excellence, which at the same time has strong links with a range of organisations. Already we work with government departments (e.g., Department of Constitutional Affairs, Department for Trade and Industry), the TUC, the European Trade Union Institute, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, to name but a few. We will hold occasional seminars and are planning to develop an MSc in Equality and Diversity in the future.”

Whilst research in CRED is informed by a range of perspectives and methodologies, its underpinning commitment is to social justice and inclusion in equality and diversity research. Its expertise is in the fields of employment relations policies and practices, global diversity management, labour force and sectoral studies, migration, professional and low paid work, career studies and organisational aspects of equality and diversity and draws on the intersecting nature of

inequalities including gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation and class.

The School of Business and Management has been particularly fortunate in bringing together such equality and diversity expertise. Dr Emma Bell’s research interests, for example, primarily focus on the relationship between religious belief and employment and in particular on ways of accommodating diverse religious and spiritual beliefs in the workplace within a changing legislative context. Dr Gill Kirton’s research investigates the roles and relationships of women within trade unions; and gender and race equality in employment. Her recent work explores the involvement of stakeholders in diversity management and practice. Dr Mustafa Özbilgin’s research is concerned with theory, policy, practice and experience of equality and diversity in organisational settings and he draws on relational sociology in order to explore these constituencies of equality and diversity in international contexts. Whereas Professor Healy’s most recent work explores the interrelationship between gender and ethnicity in trade unions, equality policies and practices in the health services, the career development of young black workers and an international study of vertical segregation.

Both Professor Mike Noon and Cynthia Forson joined the School in September 2005. Professor Noon’s research analyses the effects of contemporary management practices on the work experiences of employees. A key focus within this has been around the issues of equality, diversity and discrimination. Cynthia Forson is researching the interconnections of gender and ethnicity in small businesses.

Further information on CRED may be found at www.busman.qmul.ac.uk/research/research-equality-diversity.htm



The Centre for Research and Equality team, clockwise from centre top: centre Director Geraldine Healy, Mike Noon, Franklin Oikelome, Cynthia Forsun, Mustafa Ozbilgin, Charlene Williams and Gill Kirton.

Examples of some of the funded projects in the Centre

The Impact for Assessment Centres of Judicial Appointments on Increasing Diversity, 2005

Principal researchers: Professor Geraldine Healy, Dr Gill Kirton and Dr Mustafa Özbilgin

Researchers: Moira Calveley, Cynthia Forson, Franklin Oikelome and Ahu Tatli.

The research aimed to investigate the link between judicial assessment centres and diversity and to produce recommendations to make assessment centres better able to deliver a diverse judiciary.

Funder: Department of Constitutional Affairs

Equal Opportunities in Private Sector Recruitment Agencies, 2006

Principal researcher: Dr Mustafa Özbilgin

Researcher: Ahu Tatli

This is a new project which began in January 2006. It is seeking to understand impact of private sector recruitment agencies on equal opportunities. It is an under-researched area that should elicit valuable insights into a key sector in the labour market.

Funder: Equal Opportunities Commission

Challenging Discrimination in Career Advancement of Skilled and Low Paid Workers in the NHS, 2004-2006

Principal researcher: Professor Geraldine Healy

Research Fellow: Dr Franklin Oikelome

This project seeks to understand the reality of discrimination for highly skilled health service (doctors) and low paid (ancillary) workers in the health service, an organisation that relies on migrant labour to fill its skills gap.

Funder: European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed research project

Challenging Occupational Segregation – Young BME workers in traditional and high technology industries 2004-2006

Principal researchers: Professor Geraldine Healy and Professor Harriet Bradley (University of Bristol)

Research Fellow: Charlene Williams

This study seeks to understand the constraints faced by young BME people at the early stages in their career.

Funder: European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed research project

Involvement of Stakeholders in Diversity Management: the way forward for equality policy and practice 2004-2005

Principal Researchers: Dr Gill Kirton and Dr Anne-Marie Greene (Warwick Business School) Research Fellow: Dr Deborah Dean

‘Managing Diversity’ (MD) has been proposed as a more effective means of achieving equality for all, however there is limited knowledge about whether it leads to more positive equality outcomes in practice. The project seeks to understand the contribution of MD in alleviating employment discrimination and disadvantage by drawing on the insights and experiences of key stakeholders.

Funder: European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed research project

A century of German and a new Centre to celebrate

On 1 December 2005 the School of Modern Languages formally opened its newest centre, the Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations. The centre's creation coincides with 100 years of teaching German at Queen Mary, an occasion marked by awarding Professor Leonard Olschner, Head of the Department of German, a Centenary Professorship. The Anglo-German theme will run throughout the Department's centenary programme.

Director of the new Centre, Professor Rüdiger Görner explained why the centre is so important: "To study languages through their respective literatures is to deepen, and refine, our understanding of the other, and thus contribute to the meaningful mediation between cultures, and to enhancing the quality of reciprocal cultural transfers. The College has a high level of expertise in this area. With our combined and enhanced efforts we are certain of ensuring that sustained high quality teaching and research on German culture, including visual cultures, will continue to contribute to the underpinning of relations between Britain and Germany with all their characteristic, but enriching, differences and equally strong elective affinities."

"To study languages through their respective literatures is to deepen, and refine, our understanding of the other..."

"An integral part of our ambition is to promote the study of Anglo-German cultural relations in all their immense diversity, as one of the pivotal dimensions of European integration, both by drawing on existing strengths and by enacting the principle of reciprocity through a lively programme of visits by writers and other cultural practitioners, as well as by concentrating research-led postgraduate teaching accordingly."



The Ambassador, Thomas Matussek and the Principal, Professor Adrian Smith

The College was privileged to welcome His Excellency, The Ambassador of Germany, Thomas Matussek, to officially open the Centre. The German Ambassador strongly agreed that the Centre's mission was a vital one. He said in his address: "For me it is a very moving moment, a great honour and a pleasure to open this wonderful Centre. There is an enormous interchange of German and British culture with orchestras from Germany playing in the UK, Schiller plays on in the West End and exhibitions of German art. This is all good. But less good is the media stereotype of Germany and Germans, the fact that just two and a half per cent of British people now holiday in Germany, the only German history on the national curriculum is Hitler and the Holocaust and the sharp decline in the number of British students studying

German. I think this centre will be a cornerstone in changing this."

And Professor Görner agrees that this is an important role for the Centre: "We need every possible academic effort to rectify the press coverage that Germany receives in this country."

One of the Centre's objectives is to host international conferences and educate people in this field. The Centre will offer its own Masters programme from 2006/7 in Anglo-German Cultural Studies and one of the MA modules will study prejudice. The Masters will have representatives from various organisations such as the Goethe Institute, the British Council, the BBC, and the German embassy who will all take part in teaching the MA and all but the BBC will offer work experience.



Centre Director Professor Rüdiger Görner

Queen Mary is strongly placed to take the lead in Anglo-German Cultural relations. Professor Görner said: "With its unique resources, its cultural and other non-academic institutions, its museums and galleries, theatres, publishers and other media that are

relevant in this connection, London provides an ideal context in which the research activities of the Centre can thrive. It is moreover of genuine symbolic significance that this Centre is located in the east of London; for it is here that London's cultural diversity has always been at its most inspiring; and the presence of German and Jewish communities was, until the First World War, the most prominent influence in this area.

"It seems to me that it is an extremely rich relationship in the most positive sense over at least 300 years and I feel obliged to honour that heritage."

The Centre is intellectually integrated into the German department and beyond linking into Film Studies, History, Politics, Philosophy and the sciences. The Centre's aims are no doubt ambitious: as well as launching its own Masters, the Centre will hold an annual lecture sponsored by the German Embassy and hosted in the Embassy's residences and following a number of preparatory research seminars there will be an international

conference on Anglo-German Mythologies in spring 2007 at Queen Mary. The Centre has a Writer in Residence Programme supported by the German Literary Foundation, will publish an online journal and be home to a library sponsored by the German Embassy.

At the official launch of the Centre the Principal, Professor Adrian Smith said: "At Queen Mary we pride ourselves on doing things in a way which is innovative and this Centre is no exception. Professor Görner brought the idea of establishing a Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations with him when he joined the College and I believe this centre is unique in the world."

"At Queen Mary we pride ourselves on doing things in a way which is innovative and this Centre is no exception"



The Ambassador Thomas Matussek, guest of honour, Dr Paul Oestriecher from the Dresden Trust, and Professor Rüdiger Görner, Centre Director

Events

Queen Mary's Artist in Residence unveils new portrait of Professor George Steiner

A new portrait by Alla Tkachuk, Artist in Residence at Queen Mary, University of London, was unveiled for the first time on 18 January at a special celebration in honour of Professor George Steiner, the well known essayist and intellectual critic.

Alla has achieved international acclaim for her work, including the 'Prince of Cool' portraits of HRH The Prince of Wales, sporting black sunglasses.

Renowned critic and scholar Professor Steiner's career spans four decades. He has also written numerous books, and won several awards for his fiction and poetry. He is a regular contributor of reviews and articles to journals and newspapers including the *New Yorker*, the *Times Literary Supplement* and *The Guardian*.

Professor Steiner was the Foundation Distinguished Professor in Humanities at Queen Mary, University of London, from 2000 to 2003. An honorary degree of the University of London will be conferred on him at Queen Mary in July 2006.

Professor Steiner, said: "It has been my privilege to be associated with Queen Mary, University of London for

a good many years. I have found this to be a most stimulating experience and I feel greatly honoured."

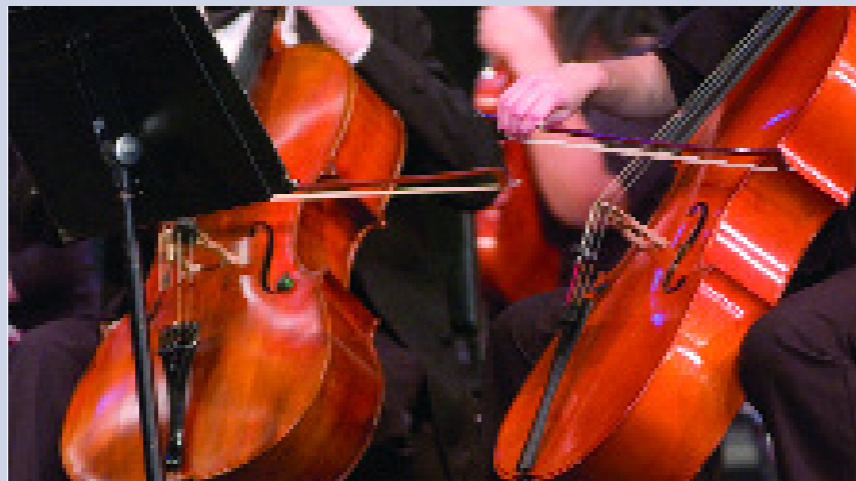
Professor Philip Ogden, Senior Vice Principal said: "The College was delighted to have Professor Steiner as the first Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities from

2000 to 2003. The portrait by Alla Tkachuk was commissioned by the College in order to honour Professor Steiner's contribution to Queen Mary and to the world of letters more generally. It will hang in a seminar room bearing his name in the new Graduate Centre for the Humanities and Social Sciences."



Annual Christmas Concert

The College's Annual Christmas Concert took place on 9 December this year. Alan Wilson, Queen Mary's Director of Music put together a programme exploring the rich musical culture surrounding the German cities of Dresden and Leipzig. Music included masterpieces by Schutz, Bach, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Weber as well as lesser-known works by Zelenka and Reger. The concert ended with carols for audience and performers including some German favourites.



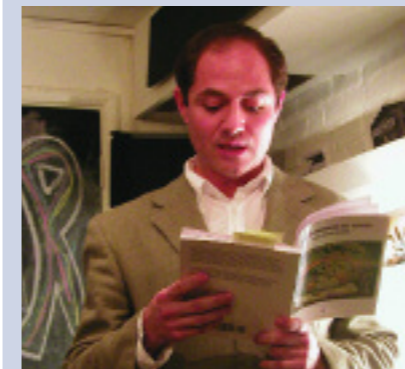
Dr Martin Knight sparks Sixth Former interest in tissue engineering

The Physiological Society funded Dr Martin Knight from the Department of Materials' Interdisciplinary Research Centre in Biomedical Materials to hold two events for local sixth formers in December last year: a workshop focussing on joints and a tissue engineering lecture. Both events were for sixth formers interested in medicine, biology, physiology or medical engineering. The Physiological Society funded Dr Knight to run these events following a successful public understanding of science grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The EPSRC grant funded workshops on HIV, cartilage, TB and teeth with local school children which Dr Knight ran with the Centre of the Cell as part of its outreach activities.

Omar Garcia gives reading at the Poetry Café

On 5 December Dr Omar García from the School of Modern Languages (Hispanic Studies) gave a reading of his poetry at the Poetry Café in Covent Garden. He was invited to read by Exiled Writers' Ink, a well known group that aims to give voice to experiences of exile and brings together poets and writers from across the globe.

Dr Parvati Nair, also from the School of Modern Languages, was involved in the event, as she is currently translating Dr García's published collection *Fragmentation of the Landscape* into English. While Dr García read from his work in Spanish, Dr Nair read her translations. Dr García's work was enthusiastically received by the assembled audience.



Dr Omar Garcia



Dr Parvati Nair

The 2006 Bagehot Lecture: "The Reporter as Witness" by Jon Snow

Channel Four Newsreader Jon Snow delivered the 2006 Bagehot Lecture on Friday 13 January. Jon talked about his 35 years of experience as a reporter, and explained how reporting and news values had changed alongside advances in media technology.

From the first satellite link-ups of the mid-80s when the BBC and ITV had to compete to gain access to one of two satellites; to modern day events such as 9/11 which were reported almost immediately by people on the street. Jon argued that while it is now possible to access images anywhere in the world almost immediately, the reporter is being sacrificed for technological development.



He said: "The moment a human being is able to go and connect with some of the human beings on the ground, and then connect back home again with some of the human beings who are watching on a one to one basis – that's the beauty of television; you're only ever talking to one person."

Obituaries

Professor Frank M Fowler by Dr Rosemary Combridge

Professor Frank Fowler, Reader in German 1970-77, Professor of German 1977- 93, and Head of Department 1977-91, died on 29 October 2005. A graduate of Aberdeen and Oxford, Professor Fowler had taught at Aberdeen, The University of Kent at Canterbury, and King's College London before coming to Queen Mary. His main academic interests were drama and poetry, particularly those of the great 18th Century German writers; his most passionate hobby was organ music – above all, Bach – and he could himself play the organ. He was a demanding and inspiring teacher and a natural administrator, and was for 22 years Joint Secretary of the English Goethe Society.

Professor E Bellamy

Professor Ted Bellamy, the founding Professor of Physics at Westfield College died in December last year. Professor Bellamy joined the College in 1960 and was Head of the Department of Physics until he retired in 1983.

Abimbola Babalola, aged 34, economics graduate from Queen Mary and Westfield College, was killed in a plane crash in Nigeria in January. After Queen Mary she went on to do an MA at Nottingham University before returning to Lagos to work at Mobil Oil. An avid collector of contemporary African art Abimbola had been launching an art venture in Nigeria when she died

In next month's *Bulletin* there will be a celebration of the life of **Laura Blomeley**, former President of Queen Mary's Students' Union (2004 - 2005). Laura died on 18 February this year following a seven month fight against cancer.

Queen Mary in the News

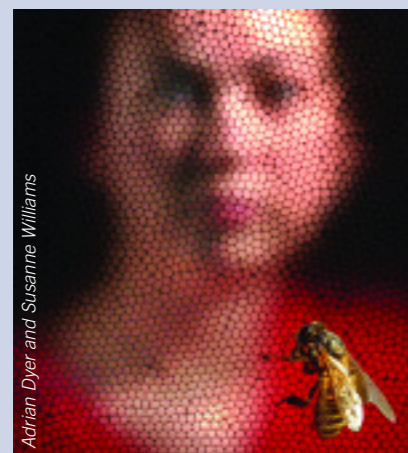
Queen Mary bucks applications trend

The Sunday Times reported that applications from prospective undergraduates to study at Queen Mary were up on 2005, and in marked contrast to the national picture which shows applications to be down across England. UCAS figures released in February showed that applications to study at Queen Mary have risen by 7.3 per cent on this time last year. Applications across the higher education sector have dropped by 3.4 per cent overall. Queen Mary's rise in applications represents the largest increase of the multi-faculty colleges within the University of London, and the twelfth largest rise amongst English universities.

Making a bee line for your face

The Daily Express featured Professor Lars Chittka from the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences' research which showed that honeybees not only recognise human faces but can also discriminate between similar faces.

Professor Chittka's study shows that it is possible for honeybees to learn to discriminate between human faces and also recognise a face that it has seen in the past. He said: "These experiments show that the task of face recognition does not necessarily require specialised neuronal hardware. Our results show that even a miniature brain can acquire face recognition as a learnt expertise."



Detox diets are a waste of time and money

The Times featured a new report claiming that new year detox products, that purport to rid the body of harmful chemicals accumulated through over-indulgence, are a waste of time and money. It found that popular ideas about detox are based on misconceptions about the body's response to chemicals in the diet. Sir Colin Berry, Emeritus Professor of Pathology in the Institute of Cell and Molecular Science said: "Even if you drink an almost lethal dose of alcohol (which I don't recommend) your liver will clear it in 36 hours without assistance from detox tablets." The report, *Making Sense of Chemical Stories*, was written by a working party of eleven scientists and will be published later this month by the charity Sense about Science.

The truth about climate change

Dr Horne, from the Department of Geography, discussed climate change and how it was once regarded as a slow process unlikely to be observable over a human lifetime in *Astronomy Now*. However, in the 1990s, ice core studies revealed that dramatic changes, occurring in as little as a decade, had taken place several times in the past.

Dr Horne argues that even if it comes, there is no reason to suppose that a future ice age would result in global glaciation destroying civilisation. He adds: "Not all humans had to endure 'harsh winds and eternal snows' in the last ice age; vast areas of the globe enjoyed comfortably warm climates."



Queen Mary People: Dr Lisa Downing



Dr Lisa Downing in the School of Modern Languages became one of Queen Mary's youngest Readers when she was promoted to Reader in French Discourses of Sexuality at the age of 30 in 2005. A Queen Mary alumna – she graduated with a BA in French from the College in 1996 and an MA in European Literature, Culture and Thought in 1996 before going to Oxford for her doctorate – Dr Downing returned to the College as a Lecturer in 1999 after teaching at Oxford for two years.

What has your research career been to date?

In 2003 I published a book based on my thesis *Desiring the Dead: Necrophilia and Nineteenth-Century French Literature*, followed by a book on the French film director Patrice Leconte in 2004. I have two books in press at the moment: a co-edited work (with Dany Nobus) exploring and critiquing the psychoanalytic concept of 'Perversion' which will appear in the Spring and a single-authored book on the philosopher Michel Foucault, which Cambridge University Press will publish in 2007. I am currently on AHRC-funded leave, completing a monograph on nineteenth-century discourses of the figure of the murderer (looking at cultural fantasies of the murderer as both a philosophical subject and as a sexual psychopath).

You are now Reader in French Discourses of Sexuality. What is the appeal?

I think the subject is an important one. Looking at the ways in which different bodies of knowledge construct sexuality involves examining rhetoric – the strategic uses of language – in order to identify underlying ideology. This method uses all those tools with which a literary scholar's training equips her, while my application of these tools to this specific field of study satisfies my need for a research subject with significant political and social resonance.

In terms of pedagogy, encouraging students to question assumptions and to think independently about the material with which the world presents them is

what teaching at university level, at least in the Arts and Humanities, is all about. Helping students to ask why certain, historically specific, assertions – about the 'nature' of men and woman, heterosexuality and homosexuality, normal and abnormal sexual practices – pass as universal 'facts' and 'truths', and giving students the analytic tools with which to demystify discourse, are important ways of achieving these aims. This is why I am delighted to be involved with the gender studies courses I co-teach in the School of Modern Languages with Dr Robert Gillett (German) and Dr Josep-Anton Fernandez (Hispanic Studies), one of which is aptly named "Unlearning Sex".

What's next for your academic career?

I want to continue developing the interdisciplinary nature of my research and teaching.

I'm increasingly being invited to bring my cultural theory/ literary analysis perspective to discussions of sexuality in other fields. For example, I've been

asked to advise an EHRC-funded group of clinical psychologists about ways of incorporating the insights of radical queer philosophy into the discipline of psychology and in February I'll be talking to a group of psychotherapists about the ethical implications of the continued use in psychoanalytic theory clinical practice of the historically specific concept of "perversion".

My other area of research interest outside of discourses of sexuality is cinema and ethical philosophy. As in my work on sexuality, I'm interested in letting apparently incompatible types of cultural production elucidate each other. I'm going to take this work further in *Cinema and Ethics: Foreclosed Encounters*, a co-authored book with my colleague Dr Libby Saxton, Film Studies, for which we've just received a contract from Routledge.

I would like one day to direct an interdisciplinary research centre devoted to the analysis of Cultural Discourses of Sexuality.

What are your interests outside of work?

Like most academics, I don't get much free time. When I do, I try to see as much cinema and the theatre as possible. I relax by practising amateur dramatics (I always participate in the annual School of Modern Languages Christmas Cabaret!); and I spend an inordinate amount of time in London's coffee shops and restaurants, enjoying good conversation with friends.



Nanotechnology – Speed is of the Essence

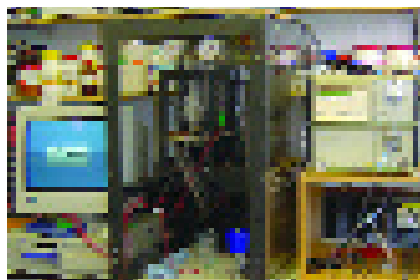
Dr Jawwad Darr, and colleagues from the Department of Materials and the IRC in Biomedical Materials have been awarded an EPSRC grant of £886,014 to develop The Nanomaterials Discovery Project.

Combinations of elements not involving carbon (called inorganic materials) can have important uses in areas from electronics and UV protection in products, to harnessing energy from the sun. In particular, when inorganic particles are very small, typically made up of a few hundred atoms (called nanomaterials) they can have unusual and exciting properties.

The discovery of nanomaterials is hampered by our inability to make them quickly and to be able to test them for particular properties. The Nanomaterials Discovery Project plans to use an established approach of 'HighThroughput methods' as a new faster way of making and discovering these nanomaterials. This approach to materials discovery was inspired by Professor Julian Evans (of the Materials Department) who is guiding the project.

Dr Darr explains: "High throughput methods of discovery have already revolutionised the way in which pharmaceutical companies develop new drugs; we believe the technique could do the same for nanotechnology. The idea is to make and screen many thousands of materials, to identify the few that may be beneficial."

The technique is being applied to a high-pressure hydrothermal flow (HF)



Hydrothermal flow system developed by Dr Darr for the controllable synthesis of nanoparticles

system which Dr Darr has developed at Queen Mary. By mixing superheated water with a solution of metal salts, the team can cause nanomaterials to crystallise from solution – much like salt does from evaporating sea water.

Current hydrothermal methods for nanomaterials synthesis are very slow and can produce at best, around ten samples a week. The new EPSRC grant is helping to fund a new 'high throughput (HT) hydrothermal robot', which will automate Dr Darr's flow system, and produce smaller samples at greater speeds.

"Our new robot will take two minutes to create a sample from beginning to end, producing more than 200 unique materials a day, which can then be rapidly tested for various applications," adds Dr Darr.

The robot will also minimise waste and use less energy; in addition, elements of the process - such as pressure, temperature and pH - can be used to control the nanoparticle size and shape, which affects their properties.

Dr Darr adds: "It's about adapting to a new philosophy of materials discovery. The robot will look for trends to give us an intelligent starting point from which we can then make discoveries much more quickly. And we can create and design compounds with a vast range of compositions that were hitherto unidentified."

Primarily the team are looking for photocatalysts – materials that can absorb sunlight and use its energy to split water into its constituents, hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen can then be used for powering cars or devices of the future, which will help to reduce greenhouse gases. Dr Darr adds: "This project is all about green materials and sustainable technologies. We will be working closely with Professor Xiao Guo, of Queen Mary's Processing and Modelling Group, who is working on cost effective processing and multi-scale modelling of materials for clean energy."

Because the robot screens each of the hundreds of samples it creates, it can also identify applications for nanomaterials that may not have been otherwise considered. SUN Chemicals, one of several industry partners, are using the robot to look for bad photocatalysts which can be a vital ingredient of sunscreens. Other potential uses include ink-jet printing, battery materials, self-cleaning windows, luminescent materials, superconductors, semiconductors in electronics, fuel cell materials, and metals and alloys.

Dr Darr said: "We are very optimistic that this project will go along way towards developing faster and more intelligent method for materials discovery, towards the goal of identifying and understanding structure-property-composition relationships for nanomaterials."



Back : Dr Shoufeng Yang, Dr Stephen Shevlin, Prof Julian Evans, Dr Jawwad A. Darr, Prof Jim Elliott. Front row: Paul Boldrin, Dr Ihtesham Ur Rehman, Prof Z. Xiao Guo