

Switching off Old Joe for Earth Hour

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<http://www.wwf.org.uk/earthhour> The University of Birmingham's clock tower, Old Joe, will be switching off its lights again this year in support of **Earth Hour** (<http://www.wwf.org.uk/earthhour>) on the evening of Saturday 23 March.

This switch-off is being undertaken in aid of the Earth Hour campaign which encourages people from around the world to switch off their lights for an hour at 8.30pm to help ease the effects of global warming. The event, run by the World Wildlife Fund, aims to raise awareness of the fragility of planet Earth and how everyone has a part to play in reducing the impact of energy consumption. After 9 years, Earth Hour is recognised in 152 countries across the globe.

The University joins iconic landmarks in Birmingham and the World for the big switch off including, Birmingham Symphony Hall, Westminster Palace and the London Eye.

The University of Birmingham is **firmly committed to environmental sustainability** ([/university/about/environment/index.aspx](http://www.university/about/environment/index.aspx)) and as a result has introduced a range of initiatives such as waste reduction and recycling, sustainable travel, carbon management and biodiversity. Significantly, the University has **reduced its carbon footprint** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/environment/carbon/emissions-update.aspx>) by 19.7% since 2005 putting it ahead of schedule for meeting its commitment of 20% reduction by 2020.

Built in 1900, the clock tower at the heart of the University's Edgbaston campus is the tallest freestanding clock tower in the world and nicknamed 'Old Joe' after Joseph Chamberlain, the University's first Chancellor. The tower is 110 metres high – just higher than Big Ben in London – and is based on the Mangia Tower in Siena, Italy. It is said that the tower was the inspiration for J R R Tolkien's 'all seeing eye' in the Lord of the Rings series.



Notes to editors

Image courtesy of University of Birmingham student Laura Pasvianskaite

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