

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

School of Civil Engineering Community

Part of
THE EPS COMMUNITY



Autumn/Winter 2013

Greetings

Like most academics I am somewhat hypocritical when it comes to league tables. In the past I have prattled on at length about why league table x is not relevant to what we do because it does not take into account the unique experience of we offer nor can one league table be a fair comparison between universities of different sizes. However, in the last newsletter I note that the first bullet point I offered as a measure of the School's success was its rapid rise in the Guardian league table (from 19th to 6th in case you have forgotten!). I also find it interesting that the first thing I thought about including in this introduction was the fact that The Times and The Sunday Times have awarded Birmingham the title of 'University of the Year' for 2013-14 and not surprisingly I would argue that Civil Engineering has played a large part in achieving this prestigious accolade. So, I am forced to come to the conclusion that one of the reasons I did not like league tables in the past is that they made uncomfortable reading. It is difficult to pinpoint the key ingredient that led to our transformation and I am only too aware that circumstances can change very quickly. However, what I do know helps is the support we have received from our alumni over the recent years. This year the School has decided to start fundraising in order to develop a sponsorship fund for our postgraduate students. Over the last couple of years we have not only witnessed the demand for postgraduate education increase but at the same time heard a large number of distressing stories from prospective students relating to financial hardship. In many cases a small scholarship of £3,000 would be transformative and turn the dream of obtaining an MSc into reality. Hence, we are looking to raise £300,000 to secure at least ten scholarships per year for the next ten years. If you feel that this is something you would like to contribute to then please contact Kathryn Chedgzoy k.a.chedgzoy@bham.ac.uk who will guide you through the process.

Returning to awards and allocates, we have also worked hard to obtain an award which I suspect that many of you will (a) not have heard of and (b) may not be that impressed once you have heard what it is called, however, it has important ramifications for the future and will help to ensure that School remains on track and looks after its staff; In September, the School was awarded the Bronze award by Athena Swan (see logo below). The Athena SWAN Charter promotes and rewards good practice in the recruitment, retention and progression of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) subjects. Since the School had not previously embraced the principles embodied in the Athena SWAN charter, the Bronze award was the highest award that could have been achieved. The School intends to use this award to ensure a better work life balance for all of its staff and students and is a small but important step in the right

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direction. I hope you find this information interesting and encouraging.

This newsletters letter provides some brief glimpses at what we have been doing since August, look out for a more in depth analysis early in the New Year.



Regards

Professor Mark Sterling
Head of School
Civil Engineering

News from the School of Civil Engineering

Global ranking reinforces Birmingham's position as a world-class university

The University of Birmingham has made an impressive 15 place rise to 62nd in this year's QS World University Rankings, cementing its position in the top 100 universities globally and placing it 10th in the UK. **To read more** [click here](#).

Shouldering the storm: engineering resilience to extreme weather



The destruction wrought by Typhoon Haiyan is difficult for most of us in the West to conceive. It seems to have been one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, with 1,833 confirmed dead in the Philippines and fears that this number could rise still further when contact is established with more remote rural regions. Professor Chris Baker, Professor of Environmental Fluid Mechanics, shares his opinion. [Read more](#).

Civil Engineering Contributions to Harvest Wind Energy: From Aeolos Era to Future Cities



Wind turbines create controversy almost everywhere they are built: people don't like the size, the noise, the threat to birds and the despoiling of the countryside. Dr Charalampos (Lambis) Baniotopoulos, Professor of Sustainable Energy Systems at the School of Civil Engineering, is one of Europe's leading academics on wind energy technology infrastructure. Lambis delivered his Inaugural Lecture in November, [read more](#).

Engineers Without Borders Birmingham Branch



The EWB Birmingham Society have hit the ground running this year with a full calendar of events including a Cameroon Catalyst project launch. Read about their plans from Branch Vice-President David Streather [here](#).

Student summers

Engineering: skills or qualifications?



Not a week seems to pass without the national media reporting a shortage of engineers. This is not a criticism; it is in fact an achievement. What was once a very much overlooked issue is now quite rightly receiving the profile and attention it deserves. A strong, sustainable supply of high-quality engineers is essential if the UK is to meet its current and future skills needs for economic growth. Read more of Michael Grove's Director of the University's STEM Education Centre, comments on this debate [here](#).

The Beale Lecture Series

The Beale Lecture Series is a programme introduced this year by the School of Civil Engineering aimed at enriching the Civil-Engineering experience by giving students an insight into life in the working world and into what they might be doing once they leave university. If you would be interested in attending or contributing to the series, please contact [Jenny Illingsworth](#). Read more about the series [here](#).

Arkwright Scholarship Trust - The UK's future leaders in Engineering honoured



The Arkwright Scholarships Trust has made its largest ever award of Scholarships for aspiring leaders in engineering. 371 sixth form Scholarships and 7 Undergraduate Scholarships have just been awarded at the 2013 Awards Ceremonies. This is the first year that EPS at Birmingham has participated in the Arkwright Scholarship scheme as a sponsor. We are sponsoring two 6th form students, Alok Kumar (EECE) from King Edward's School and Andrew Featherstone (Civil Engineering) from King Edward VI Camphill School for Boys. [Read more](#).

New staff in 2013

There have been a number of appointments in the School this term. [Read a summary of our new staff online here](#).

Your School needs you...

Would you be able to share some of your time, expertise or connections to help Civil Engineering to succeed? There are many ways in which you can give a little back, from providing a career profile, to speaking to students. **Details can be found [online](#) and [email us](#) if you would like to get involved.**

Events taking place shortly...

School events

Beale Lecture Series

- 26/11/2013: A life in the day of...a Contractor
- 03/12/2013; Centro – Update on the Midland Metro Extension Project by Peter Adams
- 10/12/2013; Campus Developments: Library Project by University of Birmingham, Arup and Associated Architects

For more information on the Beale Lecture Series please visit <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/civil-engineering/news/events/beale-lecture-series.aspx>

The EPS Inaugural Lecture series celebrates the promotion of leading academics across the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

15/01/2013 [Adventures in fluid mechanics \(a.k.a getting paid to play\)](#)

For more information on other lectures in the EPS Inaugural Lecture Series please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/inaugural

University events

09/12/2013 [University Carol Service](#)

6:15-7:30pm, on campus

This annual event, organised by University Chaplains and the Department of Music, is a joyful Christmas celebration for staff, students and families.

11/12/2013 [Festive Drinks at the Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market](#)

6-9pm, Victoria Square, Birmingham City Centre

Join fellow alumni for a festive drink at the largest authentic German market outside Germany and Austria.

12/12/2013 [USA Christmas Gathering in New York](#)

6:30-9:30pm, Revival, New York, USA

You are invited to the annual alumni holiday party. This is always the busiest get together of the year and we are looking forward to another fun evening.

14/12/2013 [USA Christmas Gathering in California](#)

5:30-7:30pm, California, USA

You and your partner are invited to join fellow alumni at a winter gathering cocktail party with UK University alumni from Birmingham, Nottingham and Sheffield.

27/03/2013 [Leaders of Tomorrow Reception](#)

6:30-8pm, London

Meet with current student recipients of the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme and students involved with the Academic Enrichment Programme at this drinks and canapés reception.

Do we have the right details for you?

According to our records your current business details are as follows: **Position** at **Organisation Name**. If this is not correct, please visit your.bham or email alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

You have received this email from the University of Birmingham because we believe that it is relevant and of interest to you. If you would like to opt-out of receiving information from your College, School or Department by email, please opt-out by visiting your.bham, emailing alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk, or telephoning +44 (0)121 414 2773 / 2744 / 4724. In order to further tailor the communication we send, all emails are tracked and processed; further information regarding our use of data, is available by looking at our [data protection statement](#)