

# ANNUAL REVIEW

## 2011-12



Cover image: the Olympic Stadium  
in Stratford, less than two miles from  
Queen Mary's Mile End campus.

Find out about the role that our staff and  
students played in London 2012 on page 22.

Image credit: Gerard McGovern

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## Introduction

# PROFESSOR SIMON GASKELL

### Welcome to Queen Mary, University of London's Annual Review 2011-12.

One of Queen Mary's great strengths is the sheer breadth and diversity of the work that takes place here, and this Review brings together some of the year's highlights from across this spectrum of activity. It provides an opportunity to share with those who work here – and many others with a connection to or interest in the life of the College – some of our key achievements, and the year's most important developments and memorable events.

The past year has been a particularly exciting one for Queen Mary. In August 2012, we joined the Russell Group of leading UK universities, which is testament to our long-standing excellence in research and teaching. Membership of the Group is not only welcome recognition of our achievements over the past decade, it also serves as an important stamp of quality recognised by teachers, parents, students, employers and research funders alike.

With the Olympic and Paralympic Games held less than two miles from our Mile End campus, we've also been at the centre of the inspiring sporting and cultural events that took place during the summer. We had the pleasure of hosting more than 2,000 Olympic and Paralympic officials and athletes from 26 countries on our campus, including Mo Farah in the run up to his victory in the 5,000 metres. It was an exciting time to be in and around the College, and more broadly we can only stand to benefit from the positive coverage of east London and the wider capital. We are particularly proud of the role played by almost 1,000 of our staff and students who acted as volunteers and who played such an important part in making the Games a success. Queen Mary also undertook research and hosted lectures that investigated many aspects of the Games, its history and its impact. You can find out more about our involvement on page 22.

This year also marked the 125th anniversary of the opening of another grand project in east London, the People's Palace. A philanthropic initiative which brought education and culture to the people of the area, it can be seen as critical to the foundation of Queen Mary. To mark this anniversary, the College has invested around £6m in refurbishing the People's Palace (page 18) and has also launched a new Centre for Public Engagement – a forum for sharing our ideas and research with the public (page 16).

More widely, within the higher education sector, the year has been a challenging one. Among other things, a new undergraduate fee structure has been introduced and the recruitment cap on the best performing students at A-level (AAB or above) has been lifted. There has been significant opposition from some quarters to the rise in fees, and there are continuing fears that young people – particularly those from less well off backgrounds – will be put off applying to university. At Queen Mary, we have an excellent track record in widening access and are enhancing our efforts in response to the current context – for example, our widening access team is working jointly with counterparts at Warwick University as part of a wider strategic partnership between the universities that was announced this year (page 7). We remain proud of and committed to maintaining the diversity of our student body – the most diverse of any Russell Group institution – and this is supported by a generous package of bursaries and scholarships that benefited around 50 per cent of this year's undergraduate intake.





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One way in which we are responding to these external challenges is to diversify our income streams, including attracting more philanthropic income to the College. This year has seen the launch of our first telephone fundraising campaign, which has raised over £250,000 to support our students, and the appointment of a new Director of Development to lead this activity. Philanthropic income enables us to be more flexible in the way in which we can achieve our teaching and research goals. We are confident that our alumni, as well as a number of charitable foundations, companies and individuals will wish to support our work, be it financially or through support of other kinds.

This year, we have continued to perform well in student surveys and in newspaper league tables. In the 2012 National Student Survey, 87 per cent of our students expressed 'overall satisfaction' with their experience at Queen Mary – the best results among the leading research universities in London. In the *Guardian's* 2013 University Guide, seven Queen Mary subject areas appeared in the top 10, including law, medicine, dentistry, materials science, English, film studies and geography, with drama coming top in the UK. We were also placed among the leading 150 universities in the world by two influential international rankings – The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings and the QS World University Rankings.

As an international institution, we are always looking to develop strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with overseas institutions of similar quality and ambition to Queen Mary. In particular, our partnership with the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) – which was established in 2004 – has gone from strength to strength. There are now more than 2,000

students studying in Beijing on our Joint Programme and this year, as the focal point of my trip to East Asia, I attended the BUPT graduation ceremony (page 33).

Other highlights covered in the Review include the Royal opening of our new ArtsTwo Building (page 14); our role in the discovery of the Higgs boson particle (page 6); major new research into the risks of excess weight gain in pregnancy (page 12); and important developments in teaching and learning (page 30).

Overall there is much in this publication that illustrates Queen Mary's continued upward trajectory, with a distinctiveness that is reflected in our commitment both to our local communities and to widening access to higher education, and also to our high aspirations and achievements in teaching and research. I hope you enjoy reading this year's Review.

**Professor Simon Gaskell**  
Principal



# QUEEN MARY NEWS

From our new partnership with the University of Warwick to our role in the year's most exciting scientific development – the discovery of the Higgs boson, here is a selection of some of Queen Mary's news highlights from 2011-12. You can read lots more news at [www.qmul.ac.uk/media](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/media)

## QM plays key role in Higgs boson discovery

Scientists at Queen Mary taking part in the ATLAS particle physics experiment at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Geneva were ecstatic about results released in July 2012, which confirmed the discovery of a new particle consistent with the Higgs boson, the elementary particle needed to explain why and how particles have mass.

The Particle Physics Research Centre at Queen Mary has played an integral role in the design and construction of essential components of the ATLAS apparatus, as well as providing computing resources at Queen Mary dedicated to the LHC computing grid. The global computing infrastructure connects 200,000 computers, providing 24/7 access to the resources needed by particle physicists. Queen Mary has been involved since 2001 and has become one of the best performing sites on the grid – we processed more than 11 petabytes (PB) of data from 15 million files this year alone.

## Alastair Campbell launches diaries at QM

Former Downing Street communications chief, Alastair Campbell launched the fourth and final volume of his diaries in June 2012 at Queen Mary. He was in conversation with John Rentoul, *Independent on Sunday* columnist, Tony Blair's biographer and QM Visiting Fellow at an event hosted by our Mile End Group.

The volume, *The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*, covers the most turbulent period of Campbell's time as then-Prime Minister Tony Blair's head of communications, 2001-03. It begins on 11 September 2001, a day which immediately wrote itself into the history books, and ends on the day Campbell leaves Downing Street.

## Technology spin-out beats 1,000 businesses to secure major investment

A Queen Mary spin-out company has won a highly sought after place on a fast-track programme for young businesses. Chatterbox, whose 'Conversation Platform' helps brands streamline their social media engagement, beat more than 1,000 other start-ups to earn one of 16 places at the global 'Wayra Academy', a major investment programme run by Spanish telecommunications giant Telefónica.

The Chatterbox team now has access to funding worth around £40,000, including office space and the use of Telefónica's expertise and tools. Since winning the competition, they have presented Chatterbox to around 700 people at Telefónica. After a six-month residency at the Academy, the start-ups will pitch again to Telefónica and other venture capitalists, hoping to secure further funding.

Chatterbox was founded in 2011 by Dr Stuart Battersby and Dr Matthew Purver, of the Interaction, Media and Communication Group in the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science. The company's unique cloud software platform allows users such as market research or public relations agencies to see who is driving discussions about brand-related issues through social media.

## Institute of Dentistry celebrates 100 years

The Institute of Dentistry at Queen Mary marked its centenary on 3 October 2011, 100 years after it began life with just four students, as the Dental School of the London Hospital Dental College. From these humble beginnings the Institute has become one of the UK's leading dental schools with a reputation as a national and international centre of excellence, in both teaching and research.

Professor Farida Fortune, Dean for Dentistry and Director of the Institute, said: "I am very proud of our achievements as educators, researchers and clinicians. We have received many awards for innovation, and teaching and training, and continually strive to develop our programmes and activities. We look forward to many exciting developments ahead."

Top: the Large Hadron Collider



**I am very proud of our achievements as educators, researchers and clinicians. We have received many awards for innovation, and teaching and training, and continually strive to develop our programmes and activities**

Professor Farida Fortune,  
Director of the Institute of Dentistry



## Researcher named future leader in cancer research

Dr Sarah Martin, a lecturer at the Barts Cancer Institute, was one of two recipients of the Cancer Research UK Future Leaders in Cancer Research Prize 2011. Awarded at the NCR Cancer Conference, the prize recognises early career researchers who are showing the potential to become world-class leaders in the field of cancer research.

Dr Martin's work has focused on investigating DNA damage repair as a target for new cancer therapies. Her research into a process of DNA repair, has shown that cancer cells missing the MSH2 gene were sensitive to the chemotherapy drug called methotrexate. This has led to trials in bowel cancer patients lacking the MSH2 gene. She is now looking at ways of targeting the so-called 'power houses' of cancer cells, the mitochondria, as she discovered that mismatch repair may also operate on mitochondrial DNA.

## QM launches new law degree in Paris

Queen Mary has launched a new postgraduate law degree for students and law practitioners in Paris, bringing the expertise of our School of Law to the heart of the French capital.

The LLM (Master of Laws) in Paris has been developed by Queen Mary's Centre for Commercial Law Studies (CCLS). The programme builds upon the success of our existing London-based LLM, offering an in-depth immersion in a common law environment, essential for those either working in or looking to work for multinational corporations.

The LLM has been established through our long-standing partnership with the University of London Institute in Paris, where the teaching will take place. The programme will start in January 2013 and teaching will be delivered in English by Queen Mary academics, with visiting lecturers from leading French law firms.

Professor Spyros Maniatis, Director of CCLS, said: "Our approach to legal education and research has always been international and comparative and Paris, a global city in the heart of Europe, is the perfect location for building bridges between civil and common law."

## Noam Chomsky speaks at QM

Noam Chomsky, one of the world's foremost intellectuals and "father of modern linguistics" visited Queen Mary in October 2011. He was interviewed by David Adger, Professor of Linguistics. The hour-long discussion explored how current theories on language inform the study of the human mind, its biological and psychological processes, and how they influence cognitive science more broadly.

Based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for more than 50 years, Chomsky's radical views have earned him global recognition and revolutionised linguistics. Considered the world's most cited living author, Chomsky has also made fundamental contributions to mathematics, philosophy and cognitive science.

## Queen Mary and Warwick enter new partnership

In March 2012 Queen Mary, University of London and the University of Warwick entered into a strategic partnership which, by combining talent and resources in selected disciplines, aims to ensure that both universities continue to thrive amidst the increasing uncertainty and pressures facing higher education institutions in England.

Striking a balance between competition and collaboration, the partnership – based on shared philosophy and mutual understanding – will enable Queen Mary and Warwick to retain their individuality while achieving common objectives through joint working in teaching, research and recruitment.

At the launch of the partnership, Queen Mary and Warwick announced a series of initiatives, including a number of post-doctoral research fellowships focused on areas of existing research excellence, jointly organised cultural and literary festivals and a joint leadership programme. In addition, a programme of collaborative schools liaison activities will see the partnership trial new approaches to outreach and widening participation by research intensive universities, designed to expand opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds in London and the Midlands.





## Research SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

### Scientists discover new clues explaining tendon injury

Tendon disorders cost the UK economy more than £7bn a year and now scientists at Queen Mary have identified a vital component of tendons which could help treat them. The research, published in the Royal Society journal *Interface* in July 2012, found that a component of tendons known as the interfascicular matrix (IFM) is essential for their function.

"Tendon disorders are highly debilitating and painful, and may herald the end of an Olympic athlete's career," said co-author Dr Hazel Screen, a senior lecturer in medical engineering at Queen Mary. "Even today, with advancements in sports science, little is known about tendon health management, and we still do not understand why some people are more prone to tendon injury than others. However, we have now found that the matrix which binds the fascicles together in the tendon, the IFM, is essential for tendon function and that changes to this structure may be responsible for tendon injury."

Scientists at Queen Mary, along with colleagues from University of Liverpool and University College London, are working on a project funded by the Horserace Betting Levy Board, in which they have been dissecting tendons from horses in order to better understand the role of the IFM. Tendon injury is common in horses as well as humans, with an economic impact of more than £3bn a year in horse racing. Around 16,000 horses are in training each year and the tendon injury rate is as high as 43 per cent, with few horses returning to racing after injury.

Lead author Dr Chavaunne Thorpe from the School of Engineering and Materials Science at Queen Mary, explained: "A specific tendon in horses known as the superficial digital flexor tendon (SDFT) stretches and recoils in the same way as the Achilles tendon and is injured in the same way. We tested how the components within this tendon worked to enable it to stretch and function effectively. When we looked at its capacity to stretch, we found that the IFM, previously thought to be unimportant in tendon function, was essential to SDFT extension in horses. We found that tendons with a stiffer IFM were not able to stretch as far before they failed."

### Can you keep up with the dance music that accelerates forever?

A scientist from Queen Mary has produced a dance track that sounds like it is accelerating forever. The track is based on an audio illusion that can make a rhythm sound, impossibly, as if it speeds up to hundreds of times faster than its starting tempo. Dr Dan Stowell from Queen Mary's Centre for Digital Music (C4DM) has been investigating the illusion – and now he's turned it into dance music.

Originally produced by French composer and scientist Jean-Claude Risset, the Risset Illusion superimposes and loops rhythms of different speeds. Dr Stowell explains: "Your brain has a preference to focus on rhythms of a particular speed, so as the tempo changes your attention is naturally drawn to events in the mid-tempo range, even when you are trying to follow a beat that is always accelerating." The loudness of the different rhythms is also manipulated to keep the recording from turning into a pile-up of an infinite number of sounds.

Dr Stowell, who researches the analysis and synthesis of sound, and also produces music under the name MCLD, was studying how to use the illusion in combination with conventional music rhythms. Following a conference presentation he was asked by a digital music label to produce a piece of dance music based on the idea. He says: "In the track, the tempo doubles about every 30 seconds, which is far beyond what happens in most music. It means that, if you say the track starts off at 120 beats per minute, at the end it is nominally going at 15,360 beats per minute."



## It's astonishing that the same mathematical method that can be used to study Jack the Ripper's crimes can be used to study malaria

Dr Steven Le Comber



### From Jack the Ripper to epidemiology and ecology

A technique traditionally used by criminologists to track down the home of serial criminals could be applied more broadly to conservation biology and epidemiology, say Queen Mary scientists.

Geographic profiling (GP) was originally developed as a statistical tool in criminology, where it uses the locations of linked crimes (for example, murder, rape or arson) to identify the location of the offender's residence. The technique is widely used by police forces and investigative agencies around the world. Now, Dr Steven Le Comber from the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences has shown in a series of papers that GP can also be applied to biology.

Spatial models in biology are highly sophisticated, but typically run forward in time, to predict how, for example, diseases or invasive species will spread. Much less attention is paid to models that run backwards in time. This is surprising because identifying sources can be used to target control efforts, such as using the addresses of people with malaria to identify the source of the disease.

Discussing the work, published in the journal *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* in June 2012, Dr Le Comber explains: "It's astonishing that the same mathematical method that can be used to study Jack the Ripper's crimes can be used to study malaria. We think that public health officials and conservation biologists should look seriously at this technique, since our study suggests that it could be used to fight diseases – and invasive species – more effectively."

### Cassini sees new objects blazing trails in Saturn's ring

Queen Mary scientists working with images from NASA's Cassini spacecraft have discovered strange half-mile-sized objects punching through parts of Saturn's F ring, leaving glittering trails known as 'mini-jets' behind them.

Scientists have known for sometime that relatively large objects in the F ring, such as the 92-mile-wide moon Prometheus, can create channels, ripples and snowballs (balls of ice, dust and rock). But until recently they didn't know what happened to these snowballs after their formation. Now scientists from Queen Mary's Astronomy Unit, led by Professor Carl Murray, have found evidence that some of the smaller snowballs survive, going on to strike through the F ring on their own.

Professor Murray's group chanced upon a tiny trail in an image from 30 January 2009 and tracked it over eight hours. The long footage confirmed the small object originated in the F ring, so they went back through the Cassini image catalogue to see if the phenomenon was a regular occurrence. "The F ring has a circumference of 550,000 miles and these mini-jets are so tiny they took quite a bit of finding," said Nick Attree, a Cassini imaging associate. "We combed through 20,000 images – taken over the seven years Cassini has been at Saturn – and were delighted to find 500 examples of these rogues."

The small objects appear to collide with the F ring at gentle speeds of about 4 mph. These collisions drag glittering ice particles out of the F ring with them, leaving a trail 20 to 110 miles long.



# Research HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

## Alleged daughter of King Charles II among exiled English nuns

The sister of a Gunpowder plotter and a royal heir were among 4,000 women who risked life and liberty to join English Catholic convents exiled in Europe between 1600 and 1800, new research has revealed. The findings were made by a team of academics working on the 'Who Were the Nuns?' project, based in the School of History at Queen Mary. The project's aim is not only to profile individual nuns, but also to understand how the convents managed to recruit and survive against a backdrop of war, plague, and political unrest in mainland Europe and England.

"We have undertaken a comprehensive study of the thousands of Catholic women who broke the laws of the land to continue practising their faith in English-led convents overseas," explains Dr Caroline Bowden, project manager and research fellow at Queen Mary. "They would have been very brave and committed to make the treacherous journey overseas; it was extremely rare for women to travel in those days, and a criminal offence for English women to become nuns after the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s."

Researchers gained unprecedented access to thousands of rare manuscripts, revealing testimonies and other written records in England, Belgium and France that had remained largely hidden in archives and convents over the centuries. These sources were originally produced by the nuns to record details of their members' daily devotional and domestic pursuits, and offer uniquely female perspectives on wider issues of the day such as literature, finance, national identity and the nature of exile.

The painstaking efforts of the research team have resulted in an extensive survey of all 22 English convents abroad together with their surviving sources. The project has since identified and profiled a wealth of fascinating women from disparate backgrounds, who joined the English convents in exile. Examples include Elizabeth Digby who was born into a landed family in Leicestershire, and crossed the English Channel to become a Benedictine nun in

Brussels in 1611. She was the sister of Gunpowder plotter, Sir Everard Digby, who was embroiled, along with Guy Fawkes, in the 1605 failed attempt to blow up the House of Lords. Barbara Fitzroy, another Benedictine nun, along with her sister, was described in convent records as the illegitimate daughter of King Charles II, although recent research challenges these claims of the king's paternity.

"The key documents they have preserved for hundreds of years have proved massively beneficial to our research," says Dr Bowden. Where possible these sources have been edited and made accessible on the project website, and linked to their author's profiles on a new online register of convent members. Manuscripts are being transcribed for a six-volume collection to be published by Pickering and Chatto in 2012-13.

## Medieval banking records discovered hidden under coats of arms

Economic historians at Queen Mary have discovered a rare accounting document, half-concealed beneath a coat of arms design, which reveals the activities of Italian bankers working in early 15th century London.

Among the pages of a bound collection of traditional English crests held at the London College of Arms are several papers belonging to a book of debtors and creditors for Florentine merchant-banking company, Domenico Villani & Partners. The coats of arms are estimated to have been painted in 1480, during a time when good quality paper was scarce and anything that was available was re-used. The banking records, half-covered by the design, date from 1422-24 and hint at the extensive trade in wool and other commodities produced in Britain during the era.

Professor Jim Bolton from the School of History and Dr Francesco Guidi-Bruscoli, who is a research fellow at Queen Mary, have spent over a decade working on the Borromei Bank Research Project, documenting the activity of Italian merchant bankers operating from London in the late medieval period.





## London English is changing because it is in contact with a huge mix of other languages and because bilingual children are acquiring English from each other rather than from their parents

Professor Jenny Cheshire



### Equality laws fail to protect working women from budget cuts

The UK government has failed to apply laws that protect working women in the wake of the economic crisis, according to research carried out by Dr Hazel Conley, from the School of Business and Management. Conley's paper, 'Using Equality to Challenge Austerity: New Actors, Old Problems' was published by SAGE and analyses the Fawcett case, a high-profile legal challenge to the 2010 emergency budget on the grounds that it would have a disproportionately negative impact on women.

In 2010, the Fawcett Society, which campaigns and lobbies for equal pay, attempted to gain a judicial review of the newly formed coalition's austerity drive; its claim being that 72 per cent of public sector cuts announced would be met from women's income as would £6bn of the £8bn savings generated in one year. The overlapping roles of the state as legislator, employer and paymaster, all appear to have had a bearing on the Fawcett Society challenge and its outcome.

Dr Conley's article draws on documentary evidence, including the Fawcett case judgment. In the transcript's opening sections there is a government admission that it had not undertaken the legally required equality impact assessment of the budget. Despite this legal compliance failure, the Fawcett challenge did not secure a judicial review. Dr Conley says: "The state is the UK's largest single employer and the judiciary is not class-neutral. Being armed with reflexive equality legislation did not provide Fawcett with any additional powers to challenge the state machinery.

"If the Fawcett challenge had succeeded the impact would have been momentous. The emergency budget would have been declared unlawful and the new and fragile coalition government would have been rendered virtually paralysed. The government and the judiciary appear to have moved to protect the interests of capital at the expense of working women," notes Dr Conley.

In spite of the High Court ruling, the Fawcett challenge fuelled an intense media debate on the inequality of the budget, particularly in relation to the loss of jobs in the public sector and the impact on women's working lives. One tangible outcome of the challenge was that the government produced an equality impact assessment for the 2011 comprehensive spending review and budget.

### Search is on for a typical London speaker

With more than 200 different languages and dialects spoken in London, is there such a thing as a typical London speaker? This is just one of the questions Queen Mary academics sought to answer as part of the first large-scale sociolinguistic study of English language in London.

The main aim of the *London English* project, led by Professor Jenny Cheshire and Dr Sue Fox from the Department of Linguistics, was to see whether linguistic changes known to be occurring in other British cities are more advanced in inner London. Professor Jenny Cheshire says: "Language constantly changes, but researchers still struggle to understand how and why. For English, it has been assumed that London has always led the way, with linguistic developments spreading out to other cities and even the rest of the English-speaking world. But this idea has never been put to the test."

The team from Queen Mary and Lancaster University, transcribed three million words from 241 Londoners, including both traditional white 'Cockney' families and second or third generation immigrants from 30 different countries including Bangladesh, China, Ghana, India, Morocco and Nigeria. The team's first paper synthesising the team's findings was published in the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*.

Contrary to expectation, these Londoners did not use more of the new features heard in other British cities (such as glottal stops for [t] in words like *butter*, or *innit* as a tag). Instead, their English was full of innovations, especially the teenagers' English. Examples include:

- new vowel pronunciations (eg *face* pronounced *fes*);
- a new pronoun (eg *man likes her* for *I like her*); and
- a new quotative (*this is me* "let's go" for *I said* "let's go").

The innovations are particularly apparent in young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, but also in white 'Cockney' families, demonstrating that the language of young London is developing into a new multi-ethnic variety.

Professor Jenny Cheshire says: "The results are important because they advance our knowledge of how new forms of language emerge. London English is changing because it is in contact with a huge mix of other languages and because bilingual children are acquiring English from each other rather than from their parents."



## Research MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY

### Discovery of blood pressure genes tops cardiovascular and stroke research

The American Heart Association/Stroke Association named research co-led by Queen Mary in their top ten advances in cardiovascular and stroke research in 2011.

The research, published in *Nature* in September 2011, represents a major advance in understanding of the inherited influences on blood pressure and offers new potential therapeutic targets for preventing heart disease and stroke – the biggest cause of death worldwide.

The international collaborative study, co-led by Dr Toby Johnson, Professor Patricia Munroe and Professor Mark Caulfield from Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, discovered 16 new gene regions influencing blood pressure.

The study involved 351 scientists from 234 institutions across 24 countries, analysing genetic data on more than 270,000 people. Dr Toby Johnson said: "Although there were enormous challenges to overcome in collecting and analysing the amount of data we needed, our discoveries illustrate the power of this type of international collaborative research."

Blood pressure is influenced by a combination of lifestyle factors and genes, and even small changes in blood pressure can increase the risk of stroke and heart attack. The researchers studied genetic variations in each person's DNA associated with high or low blood pressure, combining the effects of variation in all 28 gene regions to show the impact on the risk of developing hypertension, stroke, coronary heart disease, and structural changes in the heart.

The combined effect of these variations on blood pressure is similar to the effect of a standard blood pressure-lowering medicine. Significantly, the researchers also showed that genetic effects on blood pressure are broadly similar in people of European, East Asian, South Asian, and African ancestries.

### Weight in pregnancy best controlled by diet

Pregnant women, including those who are obese or overweight, should be encouraged to minimise weight gain through diet, according to major new research from Queen Mary. Doctors have been cautious in advising women on ways to manage weight for fear of any adverse effect on mother or baby. However, the new study published in the *BMJ* shows that following a healthy diet overseen by health professionals, stems excess weight gain in pregnancy and reduces the risk of pregnancy complications such as pre-eclampsia, diabetes, high blood pressure and early delivery.

Around a third of women gain more than the recommended amount of weight during pregnancy. Previous research has linked obesity during pregnancy with an increase in a variety of risks including high blood pressure, diabetes, miscarriage, birth defects, blood clots, pre-eclampsia, and even maternal and infant deaths.

The new research, which brings together the results of 44 separate studies, is the largest of its kind and includes data on more than 7,000 women. The researchers investigated the effect of diet, exercise, or a combination of the two. They looked at how much weight women gained throughout pregnancy and whether mother or child suffered from any complications.

Although all three methods reduced the mother's weight gain, diet had the greatest effect with an average reduction of nearly four kilograms. Exercise only resulted in an average reduction in weight gain of just 0.7kg. A combination of diet and exercise only produced an average reduction of one kilogram. Crucially, babies' birth weights were not affected by dieting.

The research was led by Dr Shakila Thangaratinam, a Clinical Senior Lecturer and Consultant Obstetrician at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry. She said: "We are seeing more women who gain excess weight when they are pregnant and we know these women and their babies are at increased risk of complications. Weight control is difficult but this study shows that by carefully advising pregnant women on weight management methods, especially diet, we can reduce weight gain."



## It was no surprise to see that diabetes risk is high in areas where poverty was high. What was surprising was that some of these pockets of deprivation and ill-health have persisted for over 100 years

Dr Douglas Noble



### Modern health mapping shows how poverty and ill health persist over 100 years

Researchers from Queen Mary are aiming to improve the health of Londoners by combining a century-old mapping technique with up-to-the-minute technology. Using Type 2 diabetes as their example, the researchers have compiled detailed maps of east London highlighting the geographical ‘hotspots’ of disease risk. The maps, which are published in *BMJ Open* reveal startling similarities to the renowned ‘poverty maps’ created in the late 19th Century by Victorian reformist, Charles Booth.

The researchers chose to study Type 2 diabetes risk because it has well-known risk factors and is preventable. It is strongly associated with poverty and South Asian ethnicity, both of which are common in east London today. The aim of the project is to help local authority and NHS services to tackle poor health by directing efforts where they are most needed. The study examined the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham, but the researchers say that the technique could be applied anywhere in the UK, and to other diseases.

Unlike the Booth maps which were based on observation, the new study uses an entire set of electronic records from GP surgeries in the area. This means that the maps are much more accurate and will be useful to individual GP surgeries.

The study was led by Douglas Noble, a Public Health Doctor and Lecturer at Barts and The London Medical School and published in *BMJ Open* with additional material in a full report aimed at the NHS and Public Health specialists. Dr Noble said: “It was no surprise to see that diabetes risk is high in areas where poverty was high. What was surprising was that some of these pockets of deprivation and ill-health have persisted for over 100 years. But unlike in Booth’s time, we now know how diseases like diabetes can be prevented. Using electronic records to create maps like these throughout the country could improve health and save money for the NHS.”

### Research proving link between virus and MS could point the way to treatment and prevention

A recent study by Queen Mary researchers has identified a virus that tricks the immune system into triggering inflammation and nerve cell damage in the brain, which is known to cause multiple sclerosis (MS).

Previous research has suggested a link between the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and MS; the new study proves the virus is involved in a manner more sophisticated and subtle than previously imagined, and may offer new ways to treat or prevent the disease.

MS is a neurological condition that affects around 100,000 people in the UK. It can cause vision problems, difficulties with walking and fatigue, and tends to strike mainly young and middle-aged women. Its causes are not completely understood but both genes and environment are known to play a role.

The new research, which was published in the journal *Neurology*, looked at post-mortem brains of MS patients, examining areas where neurological damage had recently occurred.

Dr Ute-Christiane Meier from Barts and the London Medical School led the research. She explained: “EBV is quite a clever virus; when it’s not growing and spreading it can hide away in our immune cells. In this study we used a different technique which allowed us to detect the virus in the brains of some people affected by MS, even when it was hiding away in the cells.”

Dr Meier and her team of collaborators found that, although the virus was not actively spreading, it was releasing a chemical message into areas of the brain nearby. This chemical message – made up of small RNA molecules – was activating the body’s immune system, causing inflammation. This damages nerve cells in the brain and causes MS symptoms.

Dr Meier continued: “We have to study more MS brains but this is potentially very exciting research. Now we understand how EBV gets smuggled into the brain by cells of the immune system and that it is found at the crime scene, right where the attack on our nervous system occurs. Now we know this, we may have a number of new ways of treating or even preventing the disease.”





# CAMPUS DEVELOPMENTS

Queen Mary is committed to providing exceptional buildings and infrastructure for studying, living and working. Over the past 15 years, we have invested around £250m on new buildings and facilities. Whether it's providing new study bedrooms, refurbishing laboratories or classrooms, or creating new space for teaching and research, we always seek design advice of the highest quality. We now have some of the most innovative architecture of any university in the UK.

## Royal visit for opening of new humanities building

In March 2012, HRH the Princess Royal visited Queen Mary to officially open the £21m ArtsTwo Building – a stunning new home for our School of History and the Leo Baeck Institute London, a leading research hub for the study of German Jewish history and culture.

The five-story building, designed by Wilkinson Eyre, has a suite of seminar rooms and a 300-seat lecture theatre, facilities that serve both the College and local community. Professor Julian Jackson, Head of History, described the building as “architecturally distinguished, and a very pleasant place to be. It's quiet and light, and people like working here.”

The building also provides the Film and Drama departments with a studio for teaching and research, and new performance space. Jen Harvie, Professor of English and Drama, said: “Previously we used the Boiler Room at the back of the People's Palace for performances. It was a quirky and fun space, but was full of pipes and we had to work around the peculiarities of the room. The new studio is extremely flexible and suited to all kinds of performance.”

Interestingly, ArtsTwo is built on anti-vibration pads to reduce the rumble of the London Underground that runs beneath it. The building also overlooks the Novo Cemetery, which dates back to 1733; the cemetery was re-landscaped to coincide with the opening of ArtsTwo (see page 26).

A series of public events were held to mark the opening of the building, including lectures, readings, seminars, musical performances and film. Speakers included historians Simon Schama and Natalie Zemon Davis, and the poet and writer Ruth Padel.

### ArtsTwo incorporates innovative environmental features including:

- A glazed double-height corridor on the public side of the building which shields it from the sound of Mile End Road below and acts as a solar chimney, drawing heat up and outside.
- Rows of aerodynamic-shaped aluminium fins fitted to the south-facing outside of the building protect it from solar glare and a build-up of heat.
- Exposed concrete inside provides thermal mass to regulate the temperature, day and night.
- Ground source heat pumps provide renewable energy, reducing the building's energy load by between 11 and 13 per cent.
- The building has an attractive courtyard roof garden – planted with native species and loose stones, it is designed to attract and support wildlife.



## Investment in an outstanding Graduate Centre will improve the experience and resources for postgraduate students, particularly those in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Simon Gaskell, Principal



HRH the Princess Royal meeting students at the ArtsTwo opening

## Improving recreational space for our students

On the Mile End campus, a £5m refurbishment of the existing catering building has created a new centre – The Hub – dedicated to student activities. Devised in consultation with the Students' Union and faith groups, The Hub opened in September 2012. It provides a new home for a wide range of student support services, including a new Students' Union reception area, offices and events space; well-equipped and dedicated space for study and learning; bookable rooms for student societies; a new multi-faith prayer room; and a larger bookshop.

The Students' Association facilities on the Whitechapel campus have also benefitted from a recent makeover. The revamped space, which opened in March 2012, features a completely refurbished ground floor with a new reception area and a shop. There is also a new and improved layout for the Griffin bar, as well as a new games room and dance studio.

## Refurbished Fogg building wins sustainability award

The formerly fading 1970s GE Fogg building, home to the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, has undergone an award-winning transformation. As part of a sustainable refurbishment planned with architects Fraser Brown MacKenna, the building now has improved insulation, high-performance glazing, and a striking new identity.

The logistical challenges of negotiating working laboratories and a building that bridges a public highway were cleverly overcome, with 4,600 square metres of cladding and curtain walling installed across the complex building geometry. The cladding increases the thermal performance of the building and reduces its carbon footprint. On the south elevation, it incorporates photo-voltaic cells, providing a renewable source of energy – excess energy can be exported to the National Grid.

The refurbishment has won a Green Gown Award for sustainable construction and refurbishment. Rebecca Maiden, Head of Sustainability at Queen Mary, said: "The GE Fogg Building is a stand-out building, both architecturally and in the very important sustainability features which have been incorporated into the design and construction. The College is committed to sustainability and this refurbishment highlights the depth of that commitment."

## Queen Mary launches new Heart Centre

In 2011, we opened the new £25m William Harvey Heart Centre at our Charterhouse Square campus, which aims to help meet the need for therapies for heart disease, the leading cause of death worldwide. Bringing together our strength in cardiovascular pharmacology and basic science, it will encompass laboratory work and patient engagement in east London, enabling collaborative work to be translated into clinical care. It provides the cardiovascular research hub for the £312m rebuild of St Bartholomew's Hospital, due to open in 2014.

## Plans for visionary new graduate centre

Queen Mary has announced plans for a stunning new Graduate Centre at its Mile End campus to be built on the site of the recently demolished Chemistry Building, behind the Queens' Building.

The planned building will provide new teaching and learning space for all postgraduate students, as well as office space, 123 en-suite residential rooms and one-bed flats, lecture theatres, reading and common rooms, and a cafeteria. It will also contain a mock trading floor, an IT lab for the School of Economics and Finance and – echoing the original People's Palace – a winter garden.

Principal, Professor Simon Gaskell, says: "Investment in an outstanding Graduate Centre will improve the experience and resources for postgraduate students, particularly those in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, but it will also improve the already award-winning Mile End campus for the whole Queen Mary community."

The scheme will include a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant, servicing eight other buildings on campus, and will significantly contribute to the College's Carbon Strategy. CHP plants produce electricity using a gas engine and also provide a large amount of heat as a by-product.



## Feature

# NEW CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



As part of the 125th anniversary celebrations of the opening of the People's Palace, Queen Mary is launching a new Centre for Public Engagement – a forum for sharing the College's ideas and research. Nick Sarson went to the Blizard Building in Whitechapel – the Centre's planned home – to meet Professor Mike Curtis, Director of the Centre for Public Engagement (CPE).

From the outside the sleek glass rectangle of the Blizard Building could be mistaken for the high-tech testing centre of an F1 team or the HQ of a global consulting firm. The contrast as you step inside is dramatic. Strange structures float; there are intense pinks, oranges, reds; there's an elevated internal walkway, and below, vast, bright open-plan labs with scientists in white coats busy at work. It's easy to see why the children who come here to visit the Centre of the Cell – Queen Mary's flagship science education project contained in one of the floating amorphous shapes – are blown away. If Willy Wonka had moved into biomedical science, this is what his labs would have looked like.

I'm here to meet Professor Mike Curtis, Director of the new Centre for Public Engagement (and also Director of the Blizard Institute), to find out what the Centre is all about. A bit like the forms that float in the Blizard, the term 'public engagement' is quite hard to pin down. As Mike Curtis says, it means different things to different sectors: "In politics, it's about engaging with the electorate and consulting on policy or proposed changes." But at Queen Mary, it's best summarised as the work our staff and students do with external partners – businesses, charities, community organisations, government, and the wider public, to achieve a positive social and economic impact.

Is public engagement a new idea then? "Maybe it's a new term, but it's not a new idea," says Mike. "Queen Mary has a fantastic history of public engagement – we started essentially as a public engagement project back in the 1880s with the Peoples' Palace, a knowledge centre, an artistic centre, a concert venue, a gymnasium and a Winter Garden. It was a visionary scheme to enrich the cultural and intellectual lives of people living in the East End. It's really developed from that."

"Queen Mary has a real claim to be one of the leaders of public engagement in the UK," says Mike. "In the Centre of the Cell we have a science education centre that's unique in terms of its location, reach and profile. Then there's the Computer Science for Fun (cs4fn) project, which is recognised as being on the cutting edge in terms of introducing children to computer science." Launched in response to the dramatic tail off in numbers of students applying for computer science courses about ten years ago, Mike says, "it gets the message out that computer science isn't just plugging transistors in to a board – there is a real intellectual and creative energy in the field."

He reels off several more examples of Queen Mary's high-profile public engagement work, including Peoples' Palace Projects – an arts organisation promoting social justice – and the Mile End Group, the College's political seminar series, with its own cult following. "Peter Hennessey and his team have been bringing politicians and senior civil servants to the East End for a number of years, taking them out of their comfort zone in Westminster and Whitehall, and putting them in an environment where they can be a little bit unbuttoned. It's proved fantastically successful and has attracted great sponsorship." This work with politicians, industry, and commerce, says Mike, is just as important as engaging with public. "It's about promoting the activities of the College to a broad audience and explaining how our work translates into society."

So where does the new Centre fit into all this? "Until now this activity has largely developed organically, done by enthusiasts in different areas and doing their own thing. This is fine and it works well – we don't want to stop that – but increasingly there's a drive in government, health agencies, charitable organisations, and universities to embed public engagement into everything they do. Having some kind of structure in the organisation to support this is important," says Mike.

Top: inside the Centre of the Cell





## Queen Mary has a real claim to be one of the leaders of public engagement in the UK

Professor Mike Curtis, Director of the CPE



In the context of recent developments in higher education this makes sense. In particular, there is a new pressure on universities to establish the broader value of their work. For example, under the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework – the method for assessing the quality of academic research – significantly greater weight is going to be given to the impact of research on the wider world than under its predecessor, the Research Assessment Exercise. A new emphasis on public engagement fits in with a renewed civic accountability. But for academics isn't this just one more thing to think about? "Public engagement work does require different skills from those normally used by academics, but it is incredibly valuable as it encourages us to think clearly about what we're doing and why it is important to society," says Mike. "And this will be part of the CPE's purpose – it will help us to teach these skills – mentoring the next generation of knowledge communicators, sharing best practice so that others can benefit from our experience."

The Centre will draw together staff and students from across the College, providing a focus for the diverse range of public engagement activities taking place here – everything from patient outreach work, to work with local schools, to our award-winning student volunteer schemes. "As well as helping to support these existing activities, the Centre will foster and grow new initiatives," says Mike. There are clear benefits for members of staff, particularly when it comes to research funding applications, where public engagement is an increasingly important criteria. "The CPE will be able to advise staff on how to approach public engagement in their work. If you are working on cardiac stem cells, is there scope to develop a mobile phone app, could you organise workshops with patient groups, or could you bring this work to life for a class of GCSE students? The CPE will also put people in touch with one another, facilitating interactions and collaborative work."

It would seem hard to argue against the value of this work, but Mike says that quantifying the impact of public engagement activity is one of the areas that universities are going to have to concentrate on, and will be a key objective of the CPE. "Does our science outreach work in schools actually translate into more children taking up medicine and science? Are we achieving our goals? This is a difficult thing to assess and has to be done over an appropriate timescale, but within the College we've got the skills to do it – we have the population scientists, the epidemiologists, and we already do trials on the effectiveness of interventions. It's really about asking how do we properly engage with our communities to get the best outcomes?"



Building a Lego universe at Researchers' Night, a Europe-wide event showcasing how scientific research impacts on people's lives

At the moment, the CPE is akin to a collective, defined by its common purpose, but there are plans to give it a physical presence, with a new purpose-built facility in the Mews space outside the Blizard Building. The proposed development will be taken forward in three phases: the first, providing a new Neuron pod for the Centre of the Cell; the second, creating an exhibition pod for public engagement activities; and the third, enclosing the Mews to create a stunning exhibition and conference centre. "It's very exciting. The space would enable us to do so many new things – swapping exhibits with the Whitechapel Gallery, working with the Wellcome Collection, or hosting Mile End Group events," says Mike.

Further evidence of the College's commitment to public engagement is that this year it has appointed a new Vice-Principal for External Relations and Public Engagement, Professor Peter McOwan. He has successfully applied to Research Councils UK for more than £300,000 of catalyst funding over three years, which will help to embed public engagement at the College. McOwan says the CPE will consolidate Queen Mary's position as one of the leaders of public engagement activity in the UK. "In 2012, we have already been able to help 12 new projects to launch – everything from a project that uses drama to teach clinical practice skills, to a method of teaching particle physics in schools using Lego, to an archive of contemporary poetry. The CPE really is a fitting tribute to the vision of the Victorian philanthropists who created the Peoples' Palace, ultimately enabling Queen Mary to become what it is today."

Find out more about the CPE at [www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement)



## Feature

# 125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEOPLE'S PALACE

This year the College unveiled a £6m refurbishment of the People's Palace, giving this much-loved art-deco gem on the Mile End Road a new lease of life – the perfect way to mark the 125th anniversary of the original People's Palace. Nick Sarson takes a look at the history of the People's Palace and what the latest restoration works mean for the building's future.

It's a Jubilee year and the Queen makes her way from Buckingham Palace to attend the opening ceremony of a new grand project in east London, which will provide stunning new recreational facilities for local people. The streets are lined with patriotic, cheering crowds. The following day, *The Times* reports that the East End was a "remarkable display of brilliant and striking colours" while "flags innumerable floated over the roofs". The year is 1887.

### East London in the 1880s

In the history of east London, it's tempting to draw parallels between 1887 and 2012. But although the area still has its share of social and economic problems, this year's grand project – the Olympics – can be seen as the culmination of east London's on-going regeneration. In contrast, when the People's Palace – a philanthropic project bringing entertainment and education to local people – opened in 1887 on the Mile End Road, the area was characterised by an extreme, deep-seated poverty.

Few people did more to highlight the area's social and economic problems than the writer and amateur sociologist Walter Besant. His novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men – An Impossible Story*, published in 1882, captured the public imagination. Drawing on his work in the East End, Besant tells the story of a young heiress educated at Newnham College, Cambridge, who travels incognito to the area – the source of her family's wealth – to see for herself what people's lives there are really like.

More than the poverty of the area, what struck Besant was the tedium. He wrote: "Two millions of people, or thereabouts, live in the East End of London. That seems a good-sized population for

an utterly unknown town. They have no institutions of their own to speak of, no public buildings of any importance, no municipality, no gentry, no carriages, no soldiers, no picture-galleries, no theatres, no opera – they have nothing". The answer, imagines the novel's protagonist, is a "Palace of Delights" with "great halls and lovely corridors" where the people would be able to enjoy "music, dancing, singing, acting, painting, reading, games of skill, games of chance, companionship, cheerfulness, light, warmth, comfort – everything".

It may appear to be an unusual way to address the problems of social deprivation now, but in the era of large-scale public exhibitions, such as London's Crystal Palace and Alexandra Palace – combined with the flourishing entertainment district of the West End – a Palace of Delights will have seemed a more natural solution. The idea was seized upon by the Beaumont Trust, a philanthropic trust with the dual aims of promoting "rational amusement and technical education" in Stepney and the surrounding area. With the help of a City livery company, the Drapers' Company, the Trust found a suitable piece of land in the area and began raising the funds to build their version of the 'Palace of Delights'.

The popularity of the book did much to help these efforts and, on the 14 May 1887, Queen Victoria officially opened the first completed portion of the People's Palace – the Queen's Hall (not to be confused with the current Queens' Building, which now stands close to the original site). At the opening ceremony the Queen declared that the building was provided "for the benefit of the people of east London, whose lives of unceasing but honourable toil will be cheered by the various opportunities of rational and instructive entertainment and of artistic enjoyment".



**Around 1923 I also recall Saturday night dances and New Year's Eve carnival dances, with streamers and balloons. During the interval we would stroll through greenhouses – with palm trees and coloured lanterns. We always arranged our dates outside the 'Palace'**

Mrs Summerhill, Amhurst Road, E8  
(from Queen Mary, University of London archives)

The People's Palace brought culture, entertainment and education to enrich the lives of the local people; more prosaically, it was a distraction from the gin-palaces of the day. Entertainment included everything from donkey and art shows, to dances and concerts. There was also a swimming pool, library and, later on, a gymnasium, roller-skating rink and a Winter Garden filled with exotic plants and trees. In the early days it was a great success: the Palace Journal said that on the Bank Holiday of 1888 the Palace attracted 26,000 visitors, while attendance at Sunday concerts was said to be in excess of 3,000.

But these events were expensive, and the Palace quickly struggled to fund the recreational side of its programme. It was also criticised for lacking focus and wasting money. By 1890, the Drapers' Company had stepped in, effectively taking control of the whole project, and funding the majority of the Palace's later additions. Meanwhile, the Technical Schools, which opened in 1888 and were funded by the Drapers' Company, flourished. In 1889-90, the evening classes attracted 77,143 attendees and, by 1893, 350 poor boys from the local area attended the day technical school. Out of this developed the London Technical College, which eventually joined the University of London in 1907.

Throughout the ensuing years, the educational purpose of the College and recreational aims of the Palace were kept separate. But the Drapers' Company, who were always more aligned with the educational side of the project, had a significant presence on the Palace's governing body, thanks to their substantial financial stake in its operations. Several decades later, the Company would use this influence to play a decisive role in the future of both the Palace and the College.

## The fire and its aftermath

On the 25 February 1931, the Queen's Hall (see image right) was used for a boxing competition until 11pm. At around 3am that night a fire was reported. The Hall was completely destroyed, but the College and Winter Garden survived. In the aftermath of the fire, the College argued that due to its growing prestige it needed to expand its site and that the Palace should hand over the land of the destroyed building. Following the intervention of the Drapers' Company, the Palace eventually agreed, in exchange for the site on which the new People's Palace now stands.

## The new People's Palace

In 1936 a new People's Palace was built to the west of the original site. Designed in the art-deco style, the building was built of Portland Stone and red brick, and its imposing façade – with its reliefs by Eric Gill – would have been a striking addition to Mile End Road.

In keeping with the spirit and purpose of the original Palace, it was built as a theatre, cinema and music hall and was run successfully on that basis for a number of years. But following a decline in revenues, it was purchased by the College in 1954. The College extensively refurbished the building, moving the entrance away from the Mile End Road to the east side of the building, facing into the College, and also building a passage linking it to the Queens' Building.

For many years the People's Palace housed the College's canteen and the Principal's Dining Suite. In the 1990s, the building was refurbished again – the Small Hall (or Stern Hall) was demolished and replaced with the Skeel Lecture Theatre and part of the stalls of the Great Hall became teaching rooms.



The Queen's Hall in the original People's Palace





**I was very young during the period when the People's Palace was at its best, and my wealth was counted in pennies, but I took my sweetheart almost every Sunday to the concerts and with ¼ pound of chocolates and two three penny seats, we were able to enjoy a truly enchanting evening**

Mr Driscoll, Gale Street, Essex  
(from Queen Mary, University of London archives)



## The latest restoration works

Completed in September 2012, the latest refurbishments are the most sympathetic of the various restoration schemes. Their purpose was to restore historic elements of the recently Grade II listed building as well as make it more comfortable, with up-to-date sound, lighting, audio-visual and theatre systems.

In the Great Hall, the original 1930s colour scheme was discovered under layers of paint that had built up over the years, and was recreated. The Hall's wooden floorboards have been cleaned and, using old photographs, the decorative lantern in centre of the hall has been reproduced. The Grade II\* listed Rutt pipe organ – one of the best examples of its type – has been restored and the old projection room high up in the roof has been returned to use.

But the works have been about more than a faithful restoration of the Great Hall. The building's infrastructure has received a much-needed upgrade. New automatic cooling and ventilation systems have been introduced to cope with the heat produced by the Hall's 900-capacity audience. In addition, new theatre lighting and audio-visual systems have been installed, as well as removable tiered seating so that the Hall can be used for lectures.

Another key feature of the works has been the refurbishment and extension of the Foyer area, to create more and better break-out space. There is now a new bar, cloakroom, box office and a mezzanine level. As well as creating an attractive new gathering space for students during term, this new space is ideal for use with commercial events.

The works have thrown up a number of interesting discoveries. Fragments of murals by the artist Phyllis Bray – a member of the East London Group of artists popular in the 1920s and 1930s – were found in a space behind the Skeel Lecture Theatre. Depicting music, dance and theatre, a surviving part of the murals has been removed from the wall and remounted on a staircase above the foyer so people can see it once again. The building's original art-deco fire exits signs were also discovered in a forgotten corner of the cellars, and are now back in use, having received the nod of approval from the fire officer.



Builders at work on the recent refurbishment of the People's Palace

Commenting on the Great Hall's new sound, lighting, audio-visual and theatre systems, Corporate Events Manager, George Foden said: "They can meet the demands of any event, performance or production. It's the first venue in the country to be fitted with the new system from theatrical sound specialists EM Acoustics; the theatrical lighting system has been upgraded, and a brand new projection system offers a range of options, including a 12-metre cinematic wide-screen."

Professor Philip Ogden, Senior Adviser to the Principal and Chair of the Project Working Group said that the restoration of the People's Palace marks another important step in the College's commitment to look after its listed buildings: "The restoration complements the work completed on the Octagon some five years ago. The two together now give us public spaces of first-class quality, for the use and enjoyment of the whole College. The Great Hall will also be available for outside use and will begin to take on some of the qualities of a People's Palace for our local community, faithful to the original vision for the building."



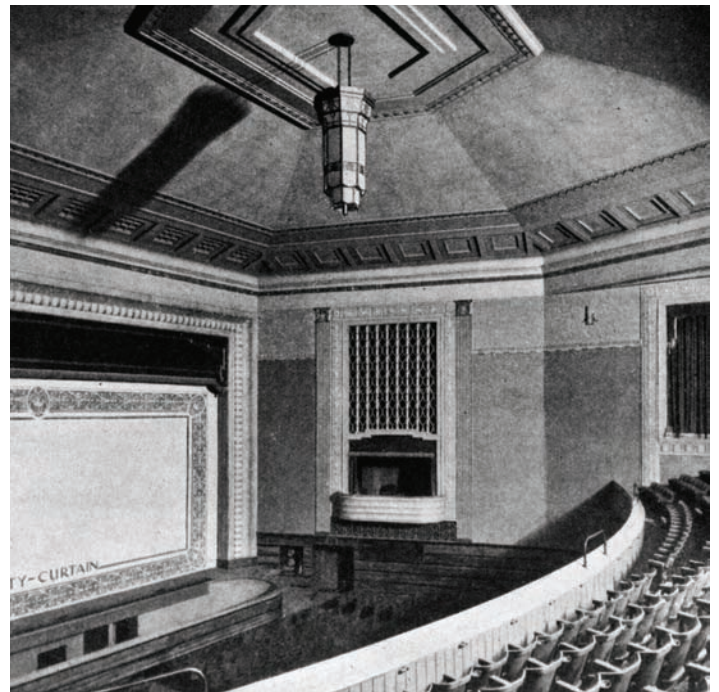
The refurbished interior of the People's Palace including the new lantern

## Timeline

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>1882</b>  | Walter Besant's novel <i>All Sorts and Conditions of Men – An Impossible Story</i> published                               |
| <b>1885</b>  | Decision to create a People's Palace in the East End. The Drapers' Company provides £20,000 to found the Technical Schools |
| <b>1886</b>  | Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone for the People's Palace  |
| <b>1887</b>  | Official opening of the People's Palace by Queen Victoria and laying of the foundation stone of the Technical College      |
| <b>1888</b>  | Technical College opened   |
| <b>1931</b>  | Original People's Palace destroyed by fire   |
| <b>1936</b>  | New People's Palace opened to west of the original site  |
| <b>1937</b>  | Official opening of the new People's Palace by King George VI  |
| <b>1954</b>  | People's Palace purchased by College and restored  |
| <b>1990s</b> | Major refurbishment work undertaken  |
| <b>2012</b>  | £6m restoration and upgrade of People's Palace completed   |

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The interior of the 'new' People's Palace shortly after its opening (c.1937)



The exterior of the 'new' People's Palace shortly after its opening (c.1937)



## Feature

## GETTING INTO THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT



Credit: London 2012

With the Olympic Park less than two miles from our campus, the Olympics has sparked all kinds of amazing activity at Queen Mary, from original research and inspiring cultural events to selfless service on the part of many hundreds of volunteers. Leigh Money reports on some of the highlights – not just from the weeks of the Games themselves, but the years spent in preparation for them.

The Union flag is everywhere: the windows of shops and houses, strung across streets, emblazoned across T-shirts, painted on fingernails, on shower gel, doormats, belt buckles. At 7.45am on a weekday, a packed Central line train full of revellers, their faces painted red, white and blue, stand aside smiling to let more people on. Strangers even talk to one another. The atmosphere is infectious. It's summer 2012: the Olympics.

As soon as London won the bid to host the Olympics, history lecturer Professor Miri Rubin started thinking about how Queen Mary could contribute to the phenomena that would be a London-hosted Games. She explains: "It needed to be more than the amazing stories that would come out of the event, as these could be written by journalists. We needed to do something different. Something that would really make use of the kind of talent and thinking in the College and at other universities. Something more insightful."

To this end, Rubin put together an impressive programme of public lectures to explore different strands of the Olympics, with a focus on "the human experiences and historical legacies of competitiveness and physical striving." Beginning in 2010, the lecture series has covered everything from architecture and outstanding achievement to political contexts and ethical dilemmas. "Of course the Olympics is not a subject as such," says Rubin. "It's a series of world events that happen to be on our doorstep. It's a good starting point for wider discussion about the phenomenon."

The lectures have been given by Queen Mary academics as well as high-profile experts from elsewhere, including political scientist David Runciman, musicologist Marion Kant, classicist Paul Cartledge and Chinese studies expert Meir Shabar. Running in the evening so that people could attend after work, the events have attracted a diverse crowd, including local government councillors, members of the public, academics and students.

## Regeneration on an Olympic scale

When London was chosen as the host city for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the appointment promised great transformation for the city: from more jobs and houses to improved transport.

The new Olympic Park at Stratford was built in one of London's most socio-economically deprived areas. It now has an excellent transport hub, a large nature reserve and newly built housing, not to mention world-class sporting facilities. In fact, the Olympic effect is visible all over east London. Outside Queen Mary's Mile End campus, more trees have been planted in Mile End Park and the Ocean Housing Estate has been re-landscaped, with new wider pavements and more green space.

Professor Steven Cummins, a specialist in urban health, is particularly interested in what happens to cities when they regenerate. He remembers when he first heard about London winning the bid: "As the largest infrastructure project of its kind in Europe, the Olympics is a dream come true for someone interested in urban regeneration. It offers a rare chance to assess impacts using a 'before and after' approach in a very controlled way."

Cummins is leading a major evaluation project: Olympic Regeneration in East London (ORIEL). A five-year longitudinal study, ORIEL will investigate the social and health legacy of the Games. The project team will interview over 1,800 local families from across Tower Hamlets, Newham, and Barking and Dagenham during the study.





The Olympic Park under development

Undergraduate geography students have also been involved in Olympic-related research – for which they won Bronze in the ‘Research Councils UK Award for Exceptional Research Contribution’ category. The students evaluated the success of community organisations such as London Citizens in securing Olympic jobs – paid at the Living Wage of £8.30 per hour – for unemployed east Londoners.

Professor of Human Geography, Jane Wills, who led the research, says: “Not only has our work helped London Citizens support job-seekers, the experience has developed our students’ research skills, their understanding of the impact of unemployment in poorer areas, and of the potential economic and social benefits of the Olympic investment in London.” The project is just one part of Wills’ decade-long research into the development and impact of the London Living Wage – a minimum hourly pay rate that affords a decent standard of living.



**We needed to do something different.  
Something that would really make use  
of the kind of talent and thinking in  
the College and at other universities.  
Something more insightful**

Professor Miri Rubin



The completed Olympic Park



**I felt absolutely honoured to take part as a torchbearer, but not at all worthy of it. I'm fortunate to have such excellent colleagues, including some who happen to be visually impaired, to carry out my research related to the psychology of blindness and the development of assistive technology**

Dr Michael Proulx,  
School of Biological and Chemical Sciences



## Inspiring torchbearers

The arrival of the Olympic Flame – lit from the sun's rays at the Temple of Hera in Olympia, Greece – signifies the start of the Games after the years of planning. It arrived this year on 18 May 2012, and set off the next day on a 70-day Olympic Torch Relay, travelling to within an hour of 95 per cent of people in the UK, the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey. A symbol of 'peace, unity and friendship', the flame was carried by 8,000 torchbearers who were nominated by their local communities for the honour. Among them were a number of Queen Mary staff, students and alumni.

Lecturer Dr Michael Proulx from the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences carried the flame in August in the run-up to the Paralympics. Chosen for his research into blindness, Proulx says: "I felt absolutely honoured to take part as a torchbearer, but not at all worthy of it. I'm fortunate to have such excellent colleagues, including some who happen to be visually impaired, to carry out my research related to the psychology of blindness and the development of assistive technology."

## Uncovering an inspiring history

Although there were no Queen Mary students taking part in the Olympic or Paralympic Games this year, it has been done before. Arthur Wint won Jamaica's first ever gold medal at the 1948 Olympic Games in London in the 400m, along with a silver in the 800m. He also won both gold and silver in Helsinki in 1952. But perhaps most impressively, Wint took part in both Olympic Games during his time as a medical student at St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, now part of Queen Mary. He qualified in 1953, and went on to become High Commissioner of Jamaica. An incredibly tall man, he was known as the 'gentle giant' and a statue of him now stands in front of the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.

## Playing a part in the Games

In the closing ceremony of the Olympics, Lord Coe paid tribute to the part played by the thousands of 2012 volunteers saying: "[They] now have the right to carry the phrase 'I made London 2012' with them as a badge of honour." Among them were close to 1,000 of our students and staff who volunteered in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. They performed all sorts of roles: staffing medical and dental clinics for the athletes; working as Games Makers, London Ambassadors, and Olympic Family assistants; and performing as musicians and dancers in the Opening Ceremony.

One such volunteer was Simon Barlow, who works for our Student Campus Services department. For two weeks, Barlow was an Olympic Family Assistant, which involved chauffeuring Fortuna Belrose, Vice President for the St Lucia Olympic National Committee. Each of his 12 shifts began at a car park on Park Lane where the Olympic fleet of sleek BMW 5 series cars were kept. Once there, he received a detailed traffic briefing, along with tips from a professional black cab driver, before heading off to escort 'his VIP' around the various Olympic venues.

Barlow says, "I got to see pretty much every Olympic venue. And as my security pass was 'access all areas', once inside the venue, I could have a good look around. I watched many of the events on the big screens, and it was great to be able to soak up the atmosphere and hear the crowd cheering."

This positive attitude was echoed by all the volunteers reporting back from their time at the Games. Anne Donaldson, who works in the Finance Department at the College, was no exception. Donaldson was working on venue entry security at the North Greenwich Arena, alongside the British Army and G4S. She jokes that she is now "well-qualified to take a job at an airport". But what made the experience so special for her was everyone's good humour: "People were enjoying a day out, it was a pleasure to be a part of."

A number of our academic staff volunteered too. Professor Nicola Maffulli, who heads up our Centre for Sports and Exercise Medicine, lent his professional expertise to the Games as a team leader for the Field of Play medical staff in the judo and wrestling events. He was also the Co-ordinator of the Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Services for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.





At the judo and wrestling, Maffulli led a team of eight to ten healthcare professionals, including at least two other doctors. “We faced all sorts of injuries, including simple cuts and abrasions to major knee joint injuries,” he said. “The most taxing scenario was extricating injured unconscious athletes from the field of play. In the open weight category, we were facing judokas weighing up to 218kg – we realised that if we needed to carry the heaviest athlete off, even with the five strongest members of the team, we would have had to enlist the help of his opponent!”

As a former wrestler himself, Maffulli could easily relate to the athletes. “I fought at fairly high level, and unfortunately I’ve experienced many of the injuries that these athletes suffer from.” Does he ever wish he was still competing? “The spirit is there, but the body fails me! I just feel lucky that my profession allows me to be in close constant contact with elite athletes. The biggest challenge was that I had to sort out the injured athletes within two minutes, or the match would have been won by their opponent. The great thing is that on several occasions the athlete I treated went on to win the Olympic title.”



Simon Barlow with Katherina Grainger and Annie Watkins, gold medal winners in the Women’s Double Skulls event

## A tea party on Mile End Road, planting an edible garden, putting on a show for and by young people

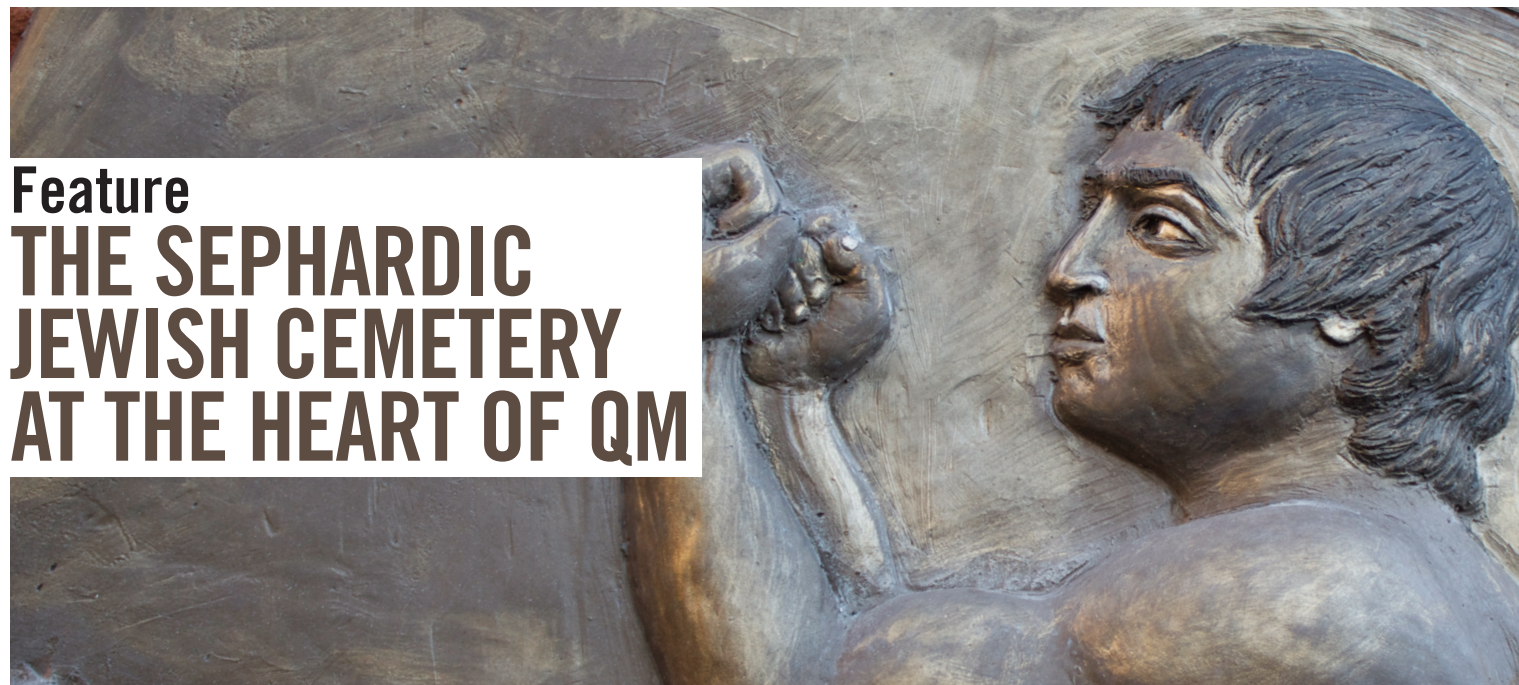
These three events have one thing in common: they are all part of 2012’s Cultural Olympiad, the huge arts festival that has been taking place across the UK.

Sit With Me, the pop-up tea party on the Mile End Road brought together local residents, curious passers-by and staff and students, to enjoy a slice of cake, a cup of tea and a chat. The event was part of drama lecturer Dr Ali Campbell’s ‘Living Map Project’, which celebrated the hidden histories and changing identity of the Mile End area in the run-up to the Olympics. Campbell has worked with primary school children, elders, and other community groups to uncover their dreams, aspirations and memories about the area. He says: “We have used performance as a powerful, shared language to animate and celebrate personal and collective visions of that one mile and to install these visions in eye-catching locations to be admired, wondered at or simply happened upon.”

In July, Queen Mary’s resident youth arts charity Phakama hosted a festival staged by more than 100 young people from all corners of the world. The ‘Veleva!’ Pop-Up Festival ran for two weeks and included some highly original, inventive, and thought-provoking events. Among them was the ‘Edible Garden,’ a community garden created in partnership with the East End Women’s Institute, where three generations of local women came together to grow produce and cook for the community. A performance in the garden involved baking bread and eating some of the garden, along with the sharing of recipes for life. A recipe for living in London called for the following ingredients: one oyster card or a bike, a tonne of patience, one A to Z, a pinch of craziness, a sanctuary, and four rechargeable batteries.

At the core of the festival were 35 volunteers from Tower Hamlets and surrounding areas who acted as front of house staff, technicians, production support staff and communications assistants. The experience presented volunteers with an excellent opportunity to develop skills and experience that will be valued by future employers, yet another example of the inclusive and inspiring spirit of this summer’s events.





## Feature

# THE SEPHARDIC JEWISH CEMETERY AT THE HEART OF QM

Those strolling through the Mile End campus each day may not be aware of the fascinating history of the newly landscaped cemetery at its centre. Dr Caron Lipman, research fellow in the School of Geography, reveals some of the discoveries that she made researching the cemetery's history.

The Nuevo Beth Chaim or Novo Cemetery, with its flat gravestones nestled incongruously between the hangar-like Joseph Priestley Building and the late-1980s Library, tells an important and compelling story about one of the oldest immigrant communities to settle in the area: the Sephardic Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. In 2011, as part of a project to preserve the cemetery through careful landscaping, I received a fellowship to research the Novo's history, as well as that of its predecessor, the Velho or Old Cemetery.

The Velho, which dates from 1657, lies hidden, a few hundred metres away, just off the western boundary of the campus. As the first cemetery to date back to the 'resettlement' of Jews in England, following their expulsion in 1290 by King Edward I, its historical significance cannot be overstated. During the intervening centuries there had been small, transient Jewish settlements in England, their members burying their dead in churchyards or private gardens and practicing religious rituals in secret, but to be allowed, once more, to openly pray and bury their dead effectively marked the beginnings of the modern Anglo-Jewish community.

## Search for a cemetery

This official return of the Jews wasn't legally sanctioned but came about through a tacit nod of approval by the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell in 1656. The small group of Jews in London at the time speedily organised themselves, finding a building for a synagogue (a predecessor of Bevis Marks Synagogue towards the east of the City of London, around which the early community clustered) and hunting for a site for a cemetery. What is now the Mile End campus and surrounds was then full of orchards. The setting was perfect – Jewish law stipulated that cemeteries had to be sited outside the limits of the town and, as the name suggests, Mile End was a mile from the eastern boundary of the City of London. The original cemetery, a small plot in the north-western corner of the Velho, was off the main road to Bow, but set back enough not to be too conspicuous.

## Sephardic Jews in the East End

So why did a group of Spanish and Portuguese Jews make their home in the East End of London in the mid-17th Century? The answer takes us back to late-15th Century Catholic Spain and a series of massacres of Jewish communities, following their refusal to baptise their members. Eventually Jews were expelled from Spain altogether, with large numbers crossing into Portugal; the Inquisition soon found them there too. Those remaining became known as *marranos*, *conversos* or New Christians: they had agreed or been forced to convert to Christianity. Where possible, they continued to practice Jewish rites in secret, but this was a dangerous undertaking. As a result, during the following centuries, *marranos* scattered to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, the Americas and the islands of the West Indies. Others flowed into southern France, Italy and the northern ports, including Antwerp and Amsterdam. The new Sephardic settlement in London was drawn from exiles from Portugal, some of whom had come via the Canary Islands. They included physicians and, in particular, merchants seeking to develop a presence at key international trade centres, and capitalising on their large familial and community networks across the globe. As well as helping to finance the economy after the Civil War, these individuals also offered intelligence to Cromwell about the political manoeuvres of Spain.

Top: plaque dedicated to 18th Century boxer Daniel Mendoza



**As the first cemetery to date back to the ‘resettlement’ of Jews in England, following their expulsion in 1290 by King Edward I, its historical significance cannot be overstated**

**The Novo Cemetery represents a microcosm of this diverse community. I found many representatives from Jamaica, a few from Barbados, others from Europe – Italy, Denmark, Holland – and from Australia, South Africa, Gibraltar, Morocco, India and South America**



## A new cemetery

By the early 18th Century the Velho had reached its capacity and a search for adjacent land settled on a half-acre orchard called the Cherry Tree (or on old maps, Hardys Garden), which was to become the Novo Cemetery. Burials began here in 1733 and continued until the early 20th Century. Interestingly, the gravestone epitaphs become noticeably more anglicised at the Novo – they were written mainly in English and Hebrew rather than Portuguese, and included some sentimental verse, popular in Christian graveyards, which suggests a process of cultural integration taking place.

It fell upon the religious authorities to maintain a level of community cohesion through the common ground of religious observance and ritual, and this included the management of the cemetery. The graves were laid out east to west, with separate rows for adults and children, and important members of the community placed at the head. The rows were separated by wooden boards; those who were deemed to have erred in some way during life were not allowed to be buried in the main rows, but off to the side or ‘behind the boards’ as it was known.

It is traditional for Jewish gravestones to be plain and generally unadorned. However, some graves at the Novo depict synagogue imagery, such as books, arks and scrolls; other images include that of an arm reaching down from a cloud holding an axe and felling a tree, symbolic of a life cut short. In the Sephardic tradition the stones are placed horizontally above the grave – a statement of humility, acknowledging death as the great leveller. Small stones or pebbles are placed on top of the gravestones, rather than flowers, as a respectful mark of a visit.



The Novo Cemetery before the re-landscaping work

## A global community

By the 19th Century, some large Sephardic families were well-established and integrated into English life, while there continued to be waves of new immigrants – some joining relatives or returning after a life abroad, others starting afresh. The Novo Cemetery represents a microcosm of this diverse community. I found many representatives from Jamaica, a few from Barbados, others from Europe – Italy, Denmark, Holland – and from Australia, South Africa, Gibraltar, Morocco, India and South America. With some exceptions, you cannot distinguish which graves belong to the rich or poor, and both are interred at the Novo. Records for the year 1872 describe half of all burials as ‘charity funerals’, with some grave stones inscribed with the names of burial societies – charities set up to help widows, or developed by working-class immigrants as a form of insurance to pay funeral costs.





## Forgotten trades and their stories

Among the global trades represented at the cemetery, a glance at the census records uncovered a number of cigar makers from Amsterdam clustered with their families around the East End during the late 19th Century. Another is the trade in ostrich feathers from Africa. These became particularly fashionable towards the end of the 19th Century. One gravestone, for example, is for that of Lizzie Finzi whose father, Moses Andrade, clearly did well from ostrich feathers: he eventually retired to Bournemouth with his wife and seven servants. Lizzie, however, died in childbirth at the age of 26.

Perhaps one of the saddest graves is that of Hannah Genese who died at the age of 31. Her gravestone inscription states that she ‘died after a long and painful illness’. In early life she lived in Shoreditch with her father, a furniture dealer and her mother, an upholsterer. By the age of 18, she had moved with her mother to the Pacifico Almshouses near London Fields, named after their benefactor, Emanuel Pacifico, a wealthy Jewish physician. She was one of six children working as tailors, warehousemen and telegraph clerks. Hannah is described as a feather sorter, but by the 1881 census there is no sign of her. It seems she was unlucky in her choice of trade. Unskilled work within the ostrich feather industry was carried out in small-scale workshops concentrated within a mile radius spanning the City of London and the East End. Preparing ostrich feathers was an unpleasant job, with dust and feather particles likely to lodge in the lungs. As Lizzie and Hannah’s stories suggest, the ostrich feather trade had its winners and losers and the families of both share the same cemetery – as do those, rich and poor alike, who died as a result of childbirth.

## Boxing to politics: prominent Sephardic Jews

There are many prominent families buried at the cemetery, including a row of graves of the Sassoon family and relatives of the great 19th Century Jewish leader Moses Montefiore. Also buried here is the boxer Daniel Mendoza, a great celebrity in his day, and the first to develop a series of defensive moves which became known as ‘scientific boxing’; he was a short man and devised these moves to avoid the knock-out blows of larger opponents. He styled himself as ‘Mendoza the Jew’, becoming a role model for young working class East End Jews, but died in poverty in 1836 – he was not good with money. A plaque to Mendoza, unveiled by Sir Henry Cooper in 2008, can be seen on a wall of the Library (pictured on previous page).

Benjamin d’Israeli, financier and grandfather of the 19th Century prime minister of the same name, is also buried at the Novo. His son Isaac paid his dues as a community member, but was not a regular synagogue attendee. He was surprised, then, when he received a letter telling him that he had been elected to an honorary office of the congregation. Compelled to accept office or face a heavy fine, Isaac resigned in protest. He also decided that his son Benjamin junior, who was 13 at the time, should be baptised, a decision that enabled Benjamin to enter politics as a young man and eventually become prime minister – until the late-19th century a political career was forbidden to Jews.

By the 19th Century, the wealthier and more established members of the Sephardic community had drifted away from the area and by the century’s close a new synagogue and cemetery was established in west London. The Novo was soon abandoned, re-opening only on occasion to accommodate individuals who had reserved space in family plots.





**The new landscaping work, commissioned by Professor Philip Ogden, constitutes a significant milestone in the history of the cemetery, which for many years had sat awkwardly in its surroundings**

**The work, then, does not represent just an aesthetic facelift, but a desire for a new relationship between the College, the cemetery and the wider community**



## Queen Mary looks to expand

By the late 1960s, Queen Mary was looking to expand its campus and hemmed in to the east by the cemetery, successfully negotiated with the Sephardic Jewish community to buy the land. In 1974, over 7,000 bodies (including those of Benjamin d'Israeli and Daniel Mendoza) were exhumed and re-interred to a site in Brentwood, Essex, on land owned by the College, a move which continues to be controversial with sections of the Jewish community. The portion of the Novo remaining, then, is perhaps around a fifth of the original size and contains the most recent burials, from the mid-19th Century; this section was left *in situ* out of respect for any surviving close relatives of the deceased.



The Novo Cemetery after the re-landscaping work

## Embracing our history

The new landscaping work, commissioned by Professor Philip Ogden, constitutes a significant milestone in the history of the cemetery, which for many years had sat awkwardly in its surroundings, neglected and forgotten. Carried out in partnership with the Sephardic Jewish congregation, the work included replacing old perimeters; removing a number of trees whose roots were disturbing graves; widening and raising the path to the south; adding explanatory plaques; and creating a seating area overlooking the cemetery by the new ArtsTwo building. In the foyer of the ArtsTwo the old boundary wall of the cemetery has also been integrated into the floor, establishing a flow between the building and cemetery. With its new open aspect, the cemetery is better integrated into the campus, positioned as a central and important feature and a continuing reminder of the area's history. The work, then, does not represent just an aesthetic facelift, but a desire for a new relationship between the College, the cemetery and the wider community. It should also ensure that the cemetery becomes an important learning resource for students, local people and visitors for many years to come.

The Sephardic Jewish Cemeteries at Queen Mary, University of London by Caron Lipman is available to purchase from: <http://eshop.qmul.ac.uk>, priced £7.95.

# DEVELOPMENTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING



Higher education in the UK is undergoing a period of rapid change. The rise in tuition fees and lifting of recruitment caps on the best-performing students at A-level has created uncertainty in the sector, but at Queen Mary our priorities on teaching and learning remain consistent. We are committed to offering the most able students – regardless of their economic or social background – a high-quality learning experience, with teaching inspired by our world-leading research.

## Recognition of teaching excellence

Our academics continue to receive national recognition for their excellent teaching. In 2011, Dr Helen Bruce from the School of Medicine and Dentistry was awarded one of 55 National Teaching Fellowships. This brings the total number awarded to Queen Mary staff to eight, making us the most successful College in the University of London since we joined the scheme in 2006.

The College has its own framework for recognising excellent teaching practice through promotion criteria and contribution-related awards. One of the highlights of the year is our very own Oscars, the Drapers' Awards for Excellence in Teaching, with all nominations – and they number in the hundreds – made by students. In 2011, the awards, sponsored by Drapers' City Livery Company, were held in the Company's historic home, Drapers' Hall, which dates from the 1500s. The ceremony also recognised the contribution made by our student representatives.

## Innovative teaching methods

At Queen Mary our academics embrace innovative teaching methods that bring academic study to life. A few examples from the past academic year include:

- a number of our undergraduate medical students are working shifts with the London Air Ambulance Service, shadowing some of the UK's leading paramedics and trauma doctors
- undergraduate history students can take an option in their final year that sees them contribute research to the creation of new galleries at the Imperial War Museum
- some of our politics students were given a behind-the-scenes tour of the Cabinet Office

- as part of their Public Law module, six undergraduate law students joined academics, MPs and democracy campaigners in presenting evidence to the body scrutinising plans for a major reform of the House of Lords.

## Teaching and Learning Conference 2012

Dedicated to sharing expertise within the College, this year's Teaching and Learning Conference was another great success. A keynote address from the Principal was followed by sessions on best practice and innovations; research ethics and managing supervisors; making sense of employability; and a consultation on new ways of working. As always, some fascinating ideas emerged, including examples of how video can be used to build confidence in lab work, and a new training module that helps science students to use quantitative data more effectively.

## Enhancing our students' employability

The rise in tuition fees and the continuing economic uncertainties means that students are understandably focused on issues of employability. Queen Mary has a strong track record on employability, but we are always looking for new ways to help prepare our students for the world of work.

In today's competitive job market, it is not enough for graduates to rely on their degree as a route into employment – experience beyond the classroom is vital. We are developing a formal strategy on internships, which will help to maximise the opportunities our students have to gain experience in industry, tying together the excellent work already done by our academic schools in this area. This year also saw the launch of QM Temps, an in-house agency to help our students find temporary work both within the College and outside. In addition, we have launched a range of schemes to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise at the College.



## iTunesU is an excellent platform for building our profile internationally

Professor Susan Dilly,  
Vice-Principal for Teaching and Learning



Other new employability initiatives include:

- an intensive coaching scheme for recent graduates who are experiencing difficulties in finding work
- a volunteer internship scheme to help place students on challenging projects in local charities
- dedicated careers support for PhD students and postdocs.

### Sharing our knowledge with the world on iTunesU

In August 2012, we began showcasing some of our online content, including lectures and podcasts on iTunesU, an area of the Apple iTunes store that allows universities to make audio and visual content freely available to the public to download and subscribe. iTunesU is used by students, academics and the intellectually curious around the world, via computer, iPad or mobile device.

The Queen Mary site launched with more than 80 video and audio clips showcasing the College's excellence in research and teaching, including material such as Head of History, Professor Julian Jackson's open lecture exploring France's role in World War II. Other subjects covered include the mathematics at the core of many of today's most powerful magical effects, health-related topics from the School of Medicine and Dentistry, as well as public lectures by many of the College's distinguished professors and guests.

Susan Dilly, Vice-Principal for Teaching and Learning said: "iTunesU is an excellent platform for building our profile internationally, and to share our expertise and knowledge with a global audience. The content we've launched with is only a flavour of the many areas of research and projects taking place at QM. This is the just the start."

### Looking to the future: transforming our IT services

Technology is an invaluable tool for enriching the student experience, which is why we're investing £23m in new IT services to make student life easier. As well as introducing a new online learning environment, we've increased our lecture capture service, which means more video recordings of lectures for students to catch up on and refresh memories. We have also introduced a new email system and easy-to-manage online account for printing.

### New online learning environment

Over the last year, we have been developing an improved online learning environment, which lecturers can use to supplement their teaching. The old system, Blackboard was replaced in September 2012 with QMPlus, a new system offering advanced functionality, and support tailored to modular teaching. The system has already been rolled out for students studying on our Joint Programmes at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT).

QMPlus enables teachers to share content, such as lecture notes, recordings of lectures, and reading lists, and also to communicate assessment results and manage elements of the course more easily. It also offers more support for informal student-led learning, and for distance learning.

### Student satisfaction levels continue to rise

In the National Student Survey 2012, 87 per cent of our final-year undergraduate students expressed 'overall satisfaction' with their time here: that's above the national average and the best among the leading research-led universities in London. Overall satisfaction rates were also high in the 2011 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, with students highlighting the quality, dedication, and enthusiasm of their lecturers.

### Tuition fees, scholarships and bursaries

Queen Mary has set its undergraduate tuition fees for 2012 entry at £9,000. This is accompanied by a generous package of financial aid to ensure that students from less well-off backgrounds are not put off applying here – we expect that scholarships and bursaries will benefit around 50 per cent of our undergraduate students. In total, 30 per cent of the income derived from fees above £6,000 will be spent on attracting and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with initiatives including an enhanced outreach programme, long-term support for targeted schools and colleges, and work on student retention and employability.





# INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Queen Mary has students and staff from more than 150 countries and international exchange and partnership activities on every continent. Our international connections benefit all students and staff and, in today's global economy, are particularly important for our graduates.

## Forging new connections across the globe

This year the Principal has been on overseas trips to India, Bangladesh, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the USA, meeting College alumni, key education figures and institutional contacts. These visits not only raise the profile of the College overseas, they also act as vital fact-finding opportunities and lead to new sources of funding and potential partnerships.

A central component of the College's international strategy is developing partnerships with like-minded and complementary overseas institutions, and this year saw the establishment of a new team dedicated to exploring new partnership opportunities. Partnerships raise the profile of the College overseas, develop new income streams, and bring tangible benefits to students and staff. For example, a new agreement with University Brunei Darussalam (UBD) means that our biological and chemical sciences students are now able to travel to Brunei on fieldtrips and use UBD research facilities.

## Membership of Santander Universities Network opens new links to Brazil

In November 2011, Queen Mary joined the Santander Universities Network, a scheme set up by the bank to support higher education across the globe. The bank is providing support to Queen Mary worth £120,000 over three years, which will fund student scholarships and academic research. There will also be funding for local enterprise and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Aside from funding, one of the key benefits of membership of the scheme is Santander's strong links with universities and industry in Brazil, other Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal. In March 2012, a number of Queen Mary staff travelled to Brazil to explore the possibility of recruiting students under a new Brazilian government scholarship scheme.

## Partnership with BUPT thrives

Our partnership with the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) is flourishing. Originally only open to Chinese students, this year our jointly run undergraduate degree programmes in telecommunications, systems and networks opened to students from the UK and around the world. This year also saw the introduction of a new programme called the Internet of Things Engineering, enabling students to study the emerging field of digitally interconnected objects and people. We are also working on plans to launch a jointly run PhD.

The undergraduate programmes draw on the academic expertise of both institutions, as well as the strengths of two distinct educational cultures – the mathematical and scientific rigour found in China and the emphasis placed on creative problem-solving and transferable skills in the UK. Teaching is split 50/50 between the universities and takes place at BUPT in English, with Queen Mary 'flying professors' travelling to Beijing to give lectures face-to-face.

## New partnerships with other Chinese universities

Following the success of our collaboration with BUPT, we have been exploring further opportunities to work with other Chinese universities that share our objectives and values.

In July 2012 we established a joint materials science research institute with Sichuan University, with visiting professors from both universities and the possible creation of a new organic electronics laboratory.

We are also currently in talks with Nanchang University regarding a joint undergraduate biomedical science degree. Graduates would go on to complete clinical medical degrees at Nanchang, enabling them to practice medicine and contribute to clinical research.

Nanchang University is one of China's top 100 universities, ranked 56 out of 4,000. It is also home to China's largest medical school.



Above: Professor Simon Gaskell congratulating a BUPT graduate  
Top left: the BUPT campus



**These joint programmes help UK-China ties and offer graduates an opportunity to create partnerships in fields as varied as business, technology and science and make important contributions to the social and economic development of both countries**

Mr Christopher Wood,  
Deputy Minister at the British Embassy in Beijing



## Developing a global perspective — students visit Nanchang

We are determined to ensure that our students are given the opportunity to develop a full sense of their place in and responsibilities to the world. This includes understanding the value of speaking more than one language, recognising the need to work effectively in diverse communities and engaging with professional environments. We call it having a global perspective.

Earlier in 2012, we launched a competition in which students were asked to write about the value of having a global perspective – the prize being a three-week trip to China over the summer to teach English and learn Chinese, based at Nanchang University. Before they left the UK the six lucky winners took Chinese lessons at the Language Unit, and were given some intensive English-language teaching training. We hope to expand the scheme in the future.

*“The trip was amazing. The Chinese students were unbelievably helpful and friendly, everyone was so interested in why we were there. My passion for the language has been ignited, and it’s given me real resolve to help out Chinese students at QM.”*  
Lucy Shaddock, Law and Politics

*“For companies operating in an increasingly global market, hiring graduates who are able to take a global perspective can enhance profitability, opportunity and the diversity of their client base. It’s often one of the things employers mean when they ask for candidates with ‘commercial awareness’.”*  
Emily Huns, Head of Careers





This publication is available upon request in accessible formats (large print, audio, etc.).  
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