

Physics Alumni Newsletter

September 2011

Alumni News



Careers Event

In February 2011, the Physics Department invited a small number of alumni to speak to our undergraduates about their career choices and to offer advice and a personal perspective on the current job market. It was most stimulating to learn about the interesting and diverse career paths followed by physics graduates and the options available to future generations.

This event was well received and attended by our current undergraduates.

We are looking for volunteers to speak at this event in future years. If you have an interesting career and would like to enthuse future physics graduates, we would be very interested to hear from you.

James Rogers

Tiffany Soithongsuk

Darryl Betts

Simon Meik

Speakers at the Alumni Career Event 2011

Alumni profiles

The Physics Department was one of the first departments to migrate to the new [Royal Holloway website](#). We would like to keep developing our [webpages](#) to provide up to date news and information. We would very much like to use the [alumni profile page](#) to show prospective and current students the possibilities available to physics graduates and to provide some personal stories and memories of time spent in the Physics Department. Please [email](#) us your profile and a recent photo so that we can add you to our webpage!



<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/physics/aboutus/alumni/alumni.aspx>

Reunion



Alumni Reunion March 2011

Our second reunion on 24 March 2011 was quieter than last year's despite the added incentive of a buffet! Nevertheless, we were very pleased to welcome back our alumni to catch up with their latest news. We would like to repeat the reunion annually so, if you were not able to attend this year, we hope to see you at next year's event!

Facebook page

A Facebook group page, [Royal Holloway Physics Alumni](#), has been recently established. We hope that this will give you an opportunity to contact your former fellow students and to keep up with all the latest news. We are always pleased to hear from our alumni and would like to add as many of you as possible to our mailing list so that we can keep in touch. Of course, we undertake to ensure that all contact details are kept confidential and within the Department.

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Alumni questionnaire

For the future refinement of our physics programmes and to focus on employment opportunities, it is very important for us to have reliable data about physics graduate destinations. In conjunction with [SEPnet](#), we will be distributing a questionnaire shortly which will request anonymous information about your employment and your personal experiences of the usefulness of your physics degree in your career progression. Conversely, SEPnet is also producing a questionnaire for employers to collect vital information on skill requirements and their expectations and actual experience of employing physics graduates.

Your assistance in completing this questionnaire will not only be of huge interest to us but will also provide invaluable information for our ultimate goal, which is to promote the study of physics to degree level and boost the demand for physics graduates in the market place.



Departmental News

Undergraduate News

Graduation 2011

We were delighted that a grand total of thirty nine physics students graduated this year, twenty with a BSc and nineteen with an MSci. The department hosted a graduation tea for graduands and their parents on Thursday 14 July before the ceremony.



Graduation 2011

New students 2011/12

We are looking forward to welcoming 83 new students to the department for induction week in September 2011. We received a whopping 400 applications for physics places for the upcoming academic year, an increase of over 50% from the previous year.



PhD graduates
at
Graduation
2011

Postgraduate News

Congratulations to the following PhD students, who were all awarded PhDs this year:

[Aya Shibahara](#), [Ben Yager](#), [Michele Piscitelli](#), [Max Micheler](#), [Will Duncan](#), [Daniel Ellin](#), [Andrea Magee](#), [Neil Cooper-Smith](#), [Lev Levitin](#), [Matthew Tamsett](#).

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Staff News

Our new Head of Department, [Grahame Blair](#), took up his position on 1 July 2011, replacing [John Saunders](#) who stepped down after 4 years in the role.

“I am honoured to have been appointed Head of Physics Department and pay tribute to John Saunders for his excellent leadership over the past four years. In today’s economic climate it is particularly important that we maintain links with our alumni. With your help we can demonstrate to our existing and prospective students that a qualification in Physics opens the doors to a wide variety of fascinating and rewarding careers. I am most grateful to those of you who have already shared your experiences with our students and I look forward to seeing many of you at our next alumni event.”

Prof Grahame Blair, Head of Department

This summer we have said a temporary goodbye to Leon Ellison and Alan Betts, both of whom retired after many years of dedicated service in the Department. Fortunately, both will continue to work with us on selected projects in the coming year.

New appointments

We are very pleased to have welcomed a number of new staff to the department within the last academic year.

Two new SEPnet Fellows have joined the [Condensed Matter Group](#): [Claudio Castelnovo](#) and [Matthias Eschrig](#).

The Particle Physics Group has recruited [Jocelyn Monroe](#), as our new Senior Lecture. Jocelyn comes to us from MIT and is setting up a new research field in experimental Dark Matter searches. Her research will be carried out in our new laboratory in Tolansky, which also houses new experiments for accelerator research as part of the John Adams Institute.

New Research Staff include: [Francesco Spano](#), who started on 23 May and is working on statistical methods for ATLAS data analysis; [Francesca Pastore](#) who started on 1 June and will be working on the ATLAS trigger upgrade project; and [William Panduro Vazquez](#) who started on 13 June and will be working on trigger and data acquisition (mostly, but not exclusively, on ATLAS).

Tim Simmons replaces Andrea Hodgetts as Senior Faculty Administrator, Tom Crane is now providing IT support for the Particle Physics Group and Richard Elsom has joined the mechanical workshop.

Promotions

Our congratulations to [Glen Cowan](#) who has been promoted to Professor and to [Stewart Boogert](#) for his promotion to Reader.



Prof John Saunders



Prof Grahame Blair

“I am honoured to have been appointed Head of Physics Department’

Prof G Blair,
Head of
Department

Departmental Events

Women in Physics

The Women In Physics Group has continued to meet for lunch each month and this year has also organised termly events to include undergraduates. Invited speakers have included Prof Jenny Thomas, UCL and Prof Mary Fowler, RHUL.



Women  n Physics!

Project Juno

The Department continues to implement the principles of transparency and equal opportunity enshrined in the IoP's Project Juno.

IOP Institute of Physics
Juno Practitioner

This July we submitted a bid to rise from Practitioner to Champion status. We are expecting an imminent announcement of the decision. Check our website for the latest news!

Physics Champions!

The students once again outplayed the staff at our annual baseball game this year!

However, in August the Physics (staff) team won the College Quiz with their superior general knowledge for the **fifth** successive time, on this last occasion narrowly beating Economics by one point!

Outreach Events

Jennifer Lardge, Outreach Officer, has organised a number of successful events this year. Here are the outreach highlights:

- Jennifer has continued to expand the [outreach programme](#)
- The [Particle Physics masterclass](#) ran well again this year and a new Quantum Mechanics masterclass has been added to the A-Level provision
- National [Big Bang](#) Fair at ExCeL – the [Physics Department's display](#) formed part of the [IOP](#) exhibition stand
- [SEPnet GCSE outreach project](#) expanded to include on-campus event and in-school workshops
- [Science Open Day](#) in March had a 'Science of Speed' theme and welcomed 2,500 visitors to the Royal Holloway campus
- A total of 65 schools and 2,600 students took part in workshops and events

Jennie's successor, [Simon Reynolds](#), joined us in September and is already busy making plans for next year's event schedule.

Other Events



Royal Holloway Physics department was placed 2nd in physics department rankings in the Guardian 2011 University Guide

[Victor Petrashov](#) who had mentored the [Nobel Prize](#) winners [Andre Geim](#) and [Konstantin Novoselov](#) at The Institute of Microelectronics Technology and High Purity Materials in Chernogolovka, Moscow district, was invited to present the prestigious Sir Nevill Mott lecture at Loughborough University this year.



Did you spot Glen Cowan and Ian Murray as they made a brief television appearance in the [Beautiful Equations programme](#) shown on BBC4 earlier this year?

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