University gives warm welcome to new Chancellor
It has been easy for almost any institution to construe the outcomes of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in flattering terms.

One regional newspaper ran with a headline announcing that the RAE had shown its local post-1992 university to be “better than Oxford”. It proceeded to explain (for those bothering to read the small print) that the local institution had outperformed Oxford in a single sub-classification within one of the many RAE fields of research.

Such cases are trivial, and presumably have little impact on public perceptions of the relative research standing of Oxbridge and the post-1992 sector. More generally, however, the emergence of widely divergent ranking criteria and accompanying “league tables” is a potential problem for UK higher education.

The spectacle of RAE “winners” popping up all over the country must risk leaving outside observers with the impression that universities have learned to “spin” the news with all the dexterity of campaigning politicians.

Amidst all the competing “noise” colleagues in the University and our external stakeholders might be forgiven for overlooking the enormity of Manchester’s RAE achievement.

The 2008 RAE was a painstaking, comprehensive audit by national and international experts, and provides an essentially valid picture of the UK’s research strengths. The problem is that genuine differences in the scale and profile of the research undertaken at an institutional level means that no one league table is able to capture its full significance.

Specialist institutions such as the London School of Economics, the Institute of Cancer Studies and the School of Oriental and African Studies, while relatively minor players in the overall national research effort, are among the nation’s major centres of research activity and output in their specialist areas.

For such institutions, RAE outcomes in other fields are irrelevant; what counts is the evidence the RAE provides about their specialist research strength.

Research productivity is highly discipline specific, so it is as misleading to rank specialist institutions below broad-based research universities in terms of total output as it is to rank them above such institutions in terms of per capita research funding or research productivity.

Manchester has from the outset determined to measure itself as a research university primarily in terms of research power.

Naturally, we are also interested in the per capita output or funding of our research staff, and how we rank in particular fields of research.

Ultimately, however, it is by the scale, quality and impact of our total research performance that we wish to be judged. We want to know what impact research undertaken in The University of Manchester has on the wider international research effort, whether to defeat cancer, develop new sources of renewable energy, tackle trans-generational poverty, or understand biological systems – to name just a few peaks in our research profile.

A research power index answers such questions by measuring both the scale and the quality of the research we undertake.

The so-called medal table approach is a common sense way of measuring research power.

Aggregating the number of researchers per institution receiving a 4* research rating (the highest available in 2008) provides incontrovertible evidence of strength in depth; as, indeed, does the alternative medal table approach combining 3* and 4* ranked staff.

Presumably, when the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) makes its forecast announcement in March 2009 about how the RAE results are being translated into research funding allocations to universities, the resulting funding table will also be a defensible indicator of research power.

A clear message of the 2008 RAE is that on the basis of research power – that is, in terms of the total volume of high quality research being contributed by higher education to the national research effort - Manchester now trails only Oxford and Cambridge.

Professor Alan Gilbert
President and Vice-Chancellor
University challenges dominance of ‘Golden Triangle’

The University has confirmed its place as one of the top-rated research institutions in the country – bringing to an end the dominance of the so-called ‘Golden Triangle’.

The results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), published in December, reveal the University has one of the most outstanding records for research in the country.

In the past, the major research universities in Oxford, Cambridge and London had dominated high quality research in the UK, giving rise to the idea of a ‘Golden Triangle’. But the results of the RAE show that the quality and breadth of research in Manchester is now proving competitive with the London institutions.

In a wide range of areas – including cancer studies, dentistry, sociology and nursing and midwifery – research in Manchester ranks as the best in the country.

And the RAE also highlights significant levels of world leading research areas such as the biological sciences, engineering, development studies and music and drama.

The findings show there are more staff conducting world leading or internationally excellent – graded 4* or 3* - than at any other university, excluding Oxford and Cambridge.

And they confirm that the University is firmly on course to meet its ambition of becoming one of the top 25 research-led universities in the world by 2015.

Commenting on the results, Professor Simon Gaskell, Vice-President (Research) said: “Some of us suspected that the 2008 RAE came rather too early to provide a definitive progress report on the University’s advance towards its 2015 objectives.

“Moreover the exercise has been understandably retrospective, in part assessing research output that preceded the benefits derived from the 2004 merger of UMIST and the Victoria University of Manchester.

“It is therefore particularly gratifying that the old concept of a ‘Golden Triangle’ of Oxford, Cambridge and London is no longer relevant.

“The RAE 2008 exercise represents a comprehensive assessment of comparative research strengths. The outcome is an important input, with others, to the University’s continuing development of research strategy.

“All colleagues can take collective pride in the achievement of these results, based as they are on the enormous efforts of our researchers and of the broader community that provides technical and administrative support, and that contributes to other aspects of our core mission.”

As the tables reproduced on this page demonstrate in terms of both Research Quality and Research Power (Quality x Volume), there is no longer a ‘Golden Triangle’ in British higher education research.

The RAE results – which will have a future impact on the levels of funding awarded by the funding councils – are the most significant indication of the quality of research that has been ongoing at the University since its launch in 2004.

The University of Manchester submitted research in 53 Units of Assessment, more than any other university in the UK.

And it is now one of only a handful of UK universities with an internationally significant research profile over a very wide range of subjects.

President and Vice-Chancellor of the University Professor Alan Gilbert also said: “The very best international teaching and learning universities are great research institutions, so the excellence in research demonstrated in the RAE is good news for our students.”

In the past four years, The University of Manchester has achieved a net growth of close to 1,000 new researchers and invested more than £403 million in new and refurbished facilities.

More information about the University’s performance in the RAE can be found at the web address below.

A table based on ‘Research Power’, which is a measure of quality and volume combined, puts Manchester in third position.

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A ranking which looks at the volume of research activity judged to be ‘World-Leading’ (4*) and ‘Internationally Excellent’ (3*) shows Manchester in third position, behind Oxford and Cambridge.

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A table of the major research universities according to quality alone places Manchester in sixth place.

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Property developer Tom Bloxham was installed as Chancellor of the University in a ceremony full of pomp and splendour, warmth and humour.

Until last month the role had been held jointly by Co-Chancellors Anna Ford and Sir Terry Leahy, who had previously been Chancellors at the Victoria University of Manchester and UMIST respectively.

But at a ceremony attended by hundreds of staff, academics and supporters, Tom became the first Chancellor to be installed at the University since its inauguration, in 2004.

The historic day was celebrated in the grand surroundings of the Whitworth Hall, where Tom had graduated in Politics and Modern History just over 20 years earlier.

It was during his student days that the then young entrepreneur started to try his hand in the world of business, initially selling fire extinguishers door-to-door and later selling posters from a shop in Manchester’s Affleck’s Arcade.

Since then he has built up one of the country’s most successful property development companies, Urban Splash, which is responsible for the redevelopment of many much-loved, but run-down, areas of the city.

Despite his outstanding professional success, with disarming modesty he repeatedly told the congregation at the Installation how humbled he was to have been elected as Chancellor.

“The University had a profound impact on my life,” he said. “The University was the reason I came to Manchester and one of the reasons I stayed in Manchester.”

And bringing laughter to the Hall, he later said: “It is daunting enough to follow either of the previous Co-Chancellors, but for one person to be expected to match their joint contribution over the past four years is an impossible task.

“I was thinking I hope I can be half as good a retailer as Anna Ford and half as good a TV presenter as Sir Terry Leahy.”

Tom – whose responsibilities include serving on the board of the Arts Council England, chairing the Manchester International Festival and Director of Liverpool’s Capital of Culture team - was clearest when he spoke about his hopes to be an effective Chancellor, who would be an ambassador for the University on a local and national level.

He wanted, he said, “to let the world know that Britain has more than two world class universities and one of them was not in the south east”.

Introducing Tom at the ceremony, Deputy President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell said: “Tom brings to the role of Chancellor an immense pride in the City of Manchester and surrounding regions and in the role the University plays in the city’s social and economic development, leaving a legacy for future generations to enjoy.

“As a successful public figure with long-standing associations with both Manchester and the University, I believe he will play a valuable part in building on the existing links between the University and the city.

“I have no doubt that Tom Bloxham in his role as Chancellor will be a hugely valued friend and ambassador for the University as it seeks to realise its ambition to become one of the top 25 universities in the world by 2015.”
Remarkable quartet honoured by University

Some of the world’s leading minds from the world of science, music and business have been honoured by the University.

At the ceremony held to mark the Installation of the new Chancellor Tom Bloxham, the University also awarded honorary degrees to Professor Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Eddie Davies, Edward Gregson and Sir Bernard Lovell.

Professor Berners-Lee, who is director of the World Wide Web Consortium, is credited with having invented the World Wide Web in 1989. And both of his parents worked on the Manchester Mark 1 – the offspring of the famous Baby computer, which was first demonstrated at the University in June 1948.

Also honoured was composer Edward Gregson, who was principal of the Royal Northern College of Music for 12 years, until retiring in the summer.

They were joined by philanthropist Eddie Davies OBE, who is involved in a number of businesses throughout the world, has been chairman of leading manufacturing company Strix and is the owner of Bolton Wanderers Football Club.

But despite the incredible calibre of the company, it was pioneering radio astronomer Professor Sir Bernard Lovell who stole the show at the ceremony – commanding a lengthy standing ovation after accepting the award.

Sir Bernard, now aged 95 – after whom the landmark Lovell Telescope was named – has been spearheading research at Jodrell Bank, since he first went out to the site in 1945.

Until then the land had been used solely by the University’s Botany Department. But Sir Bernard went there in a bid to escape the interference created by the electric trams close to the Oxford Road campus.

And within five years he was drawing up plans that would transform the landscape with the 250ft telescope, which now bears his name.

The building of the telescope in the 1950s went significantly over budget, which prompted widespread criticism from the press and politicians.

Only recently has Sir Bernard been able to admit publicly that the overspend had been because he had been made to change the design to track intercontinental missiles.

When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in October 1957 the telescope was the only instrument on earth that was able to track the launch vehicle.

At the honorary degree ceremony Sir Bernard spoke of the “immense debt” he owed the University for the faith they had shown.

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He said: “It is well known and well publicised the awful difficulties that I presented your University with in changing the design and by January 1957 we had overspent by several hundred thousand pounds.

“All work had come to a standstill and there was no money to pay contractors to build the telescope and then one day I was summoned to a meeting in this building.

“I was expecting – and quite rightly – to be dismissed, for having carried out these changes to the design without proper authority.

“The University – when they heard the full story agreed to underwrite a sum of £70,000 immediately and enable the bowl of the telescope to be completed. I owe the University an immense debt.”

Under Sir Bernard’s leadership, scientists at Jodrell Bank have used the ground-breaking telescope to make a number of fundamental discoveries – including the structure of the Galaxy and the discovery of quasars in the field of pulsar research.

Pictured (l-r): Edward Gregson, Professor Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Sir Bernard Lovell and Eddie Davies.

New Year’s Honour for University academic

Leading mathematician Martin Taylor has been knighted in the New Year’s Honours list, in recognition of his contribution to the world of science.

Professor Martin Taylor, who is Vice President of the Royal Society, has been a Professor of Pure Mathematics at the University since 1986.

In the early years of his academic career, Professor Taylor’s research focused on the properties and structures of algebraic numbers. And more recently he has studied various aspects of arithmetic geometry.

During his distinguished and prolific career, he has already published five books and more than 70 papers.

But as well as pursuing his own academic interests he has spearheaded a national drive to inspire the next generation of young scientists and been at the heart of the Royal Society.

Commenting on his knighthood, Professor Taylor, aged 56, said: “I received a letter about six weeks before it was announced, but it didn’t seem real until the New Year. It is a huge honour.

“I have worked very hard for the Royal Society over the last four years. Before that I was President of the London Mathematical Society. And before that I was also chairman of the steering group for the International Review of Mathematics. So it feels like this is real recognition and a stamp of approval of these activities.

“I have been at the University since 1986 and I have had amazing support.”

Professor Taylor is due to collect the honour in July.

Meanwhile, former member of staff Diana Kloss – who continues to be an honorary senior lecturer in Occupational Health - has been awarded an MBE.

Practicing barrister Diana, aged 70, worked at the University for 42 years. And when she retired from her post, as senior lecturer in the School of Law, she became an honorary senior lecturer in the School of Medicine.

Diana continues to be a part-time judge at Employment Tribunals in Manchester and Liverpool, a member of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, an ACAS arbitrator and a member of the CJD incidence committee.

She was awarded the MBE for her work in the field of occupational health.

“I am very honoured because I have been nominated for this by the occupational health professionals with whom I work,” said Diana. “To be recognised by one’s colleagues in this way is one of the greatest achievements of my life. It is also recognition for all the people who have helped me over the years.”
Alistair, who is studying for a BSc in International Business at the Manchester Business School, spent the past academic year at the University of Navarra, in Pamplona, Northern Spain.

He recorded his time in Europe with his camera. He took a number of photographs on the theme of ‘home or away?’, including the stunning image on the left. And then he submitted his portfolio to the competition, run by the Erasmus Programme.

The judges, who included representatives of the British Council, selected Alistair as the winner of the £500 national photography prize. And now he has been presented with his prize by Sarah Lambert, from the European Commission in the UK.

Alistair, aged 22, from Hexham, near Newcastle, said: “I was quite pleased with the photos that I took, but I never in a million years thought that I would actually win the competition. It was phenomenal to win. “I always liked taking photographs when I was on holiday and then I just started taking my camera everywhere I went. It was easier to take impressive shots in Spain than on a rainy day in Manchester.”

Despite his photographic success, Alistair – who says he would recommend a year abroad to anyone – isn’t tempted by the idea of a career behind the camera. Instead he says he still intends to pursue his planned career in the banking industry.

It’s not unusual to take a few snaps when you are away from home, but business student Alistair Howarth has won national recognition for his collection of photographs.

The University is drawing up plans for a new ‘Learning Commons’ at the heart of the campus to meet the needs of 21st century students.

‘Learning Commons’ are being developed at a growing number of universities around the world. Typically they include PC terminals, interactive learning facilities, quiet study areas, social learning spaces and a café.

And now plans are being drawn up for a similar facility on the site of the Old Refectory and Moberly Tower.

The concept for the ‘Learning Commons’ at this University is to transform the Moberly Tower area into a flexible learning space that would provide integrated learning environments supported by advanced technologies.

“The creation of the ‘Learning Commons’ was one of the most ambitious recommendations to arise from the recent Review of Undergraduate Education,” said Professor Colin Stirling, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning.

“Situated at the heart of the campus - close to the John Rylands University Library and the Students’ Union - it will be a hub for student-centred activities.

“It will provide our student population with additional learning space that is technology-rich and meet the needs of 21st century learners. And we hope it will become the beating heart of the student community.”

The space will provide facilities for private study, group work, use of the library’s digital information, internet and the institutional ‘Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)’, online research, the practice of presentations, use of academic support services or conversation over a coffee.

It will provide a variety of learning spaces, including flexible rooms for group work, quiet spaces for lone-working, and ‘smart classrooms’ for IT-dependent learning-support activities. A series of ‘specialised zones’ could also provide advanced facilities including video and audio production and editing, video conferencing, a gaming and visualisation zone, and a multimedia gallery.

Further details about the project – which is being developed jointly through JRULM, Teaching and Learning and IT Services - will be released over the next few months, as decisions are made about the scale, budget and timetable for the project.
Late night calls raise funds from University’s friends in the States

Students from across the University have been returning to campus in the middle of the night to make contact with alumni in the United States. Almost 4,000 of the University’s former students now live in America. And a team of 30 current students have spent three weeks calling up to 1,250 of them. The alumni were keen to hear how student life has changed in recent years. And the students enjoyed swapping stories of life on campus. But as well as being a chance to catch up the calls raised significant sums for The North American Foundation for The University of Manchester (NAFUM), which offers financial support for students, research and scholarship at the University. Since 2004 $138,695 has been raised through NAFUM. And this year it is set to smash the $175,000 mark.

Among the projects supported by NAFUM is the Opportunity Manchester Scholarship Programme. Ten outstanding local students receive NAFUM Access Scholarships, which provide them with a £1,000 bursary in their first year. Opportunity Manchester Scholar Samuel Ratcliffe, who is studying for a BEng (Hons) in Aerospace Engineering, says the funds have already proved invaluable. “The scholarship has made a huge difference to me as I am studying a particularly intense course and could not devote myself to it anywhere near as much if I had to work a part-time job,” said Samuel.

“The money from NAFUM donors has meant that I can focus my efforts on my work and especially exam revision in December and May.” NAFUM donors also support solutions-driven research in areas of national and international importance through providing Research Impact Scholarships for PhD students. And they support students from developing countries – including Malawi and Uganda - through the Global Outreach Scholarships programme, which provides funds for living costs, flights and tuition fees.

Library trials 24-hour opening through exam period

There has been no need to ask what time the library closes for the past month . . . because it hasn’t.

Students have been able to use the John Rylands University Library around the clock for the past four weeks, as 24-hour opening has been trialled on campus for the first time. The pilot scheme was timed to coincide with the exam period at the end of the semester. And the plans were drawn up in response to requests from students. Although there was no access to books, between 11.30pm and 8am, the building was popular with students in need of computer access or somewhere warm and quiet to study. Now library staff are looking at the possibility of repeating the pilot scheme later in the year, to coincide with the exams at the end of the second semester.

Katy Woolfenden, head of public services at the JRULM, said: “What we are doing is responding to student feedback that they wanted to access the library for extended periods, especially during exam periods. The pilot is to see how it works and how it is used.” For security reasons access to the library space was limited to certain areas during the extended hours. And arrangements were made for the night bus service to run through the night. Katy says many students welcomed the extended opening hours because they like to have somewhere they can study away from their home. And she says that while some night owls like to study through into the early hours, she says others have welcomed the chance to start studying at six or seven in the morning.

Exhibition pays homage to forgotten Bollywood legacy

Photographs from Bollywood movies are taking centre stage at the Contact Theatre, as part of an exhibition that has been curated by University researcher Dr Rajinder Dudrah.

The ground-breaking exhibition brings together a number of images taken by Bollywood photographer Damodar Kamat. These ‘action stills’ are used for posters, press and magazine advertising. And they are routinely copied on hand-painted billboards across India.

Dr Dudrah, from the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, says they are an important aspect of Bollywood culture, which until now have not been given the attention they deserve.

The exhibition continues at the Contact Theatre until Saturday, 28 March 2009.
A talented composer - whose music draws heavily on her mathematics background – has won a prestigious award.

Emily Howard, aged 29, who is currently completing a PhD in music at the University, is one of three composers and five artists to receive a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award of £45,000.

Emily says the award will give her the flexibility to spend time writing some orchestral material.

"It’s amazing to receive this award and it really can be described as a life changing event. It will give me more freedom to decide what I really want to do with my music. Over the next few years, I’d like to write longer orchestral pieces - and this award will help me do that."

Emily, whose PhD is being supervised by renowned composer Professor John Casken, has already been appointed as Liverpool City Council Composer in Residence and has also secured a music lecturer post at Leeds University.

One of her pieces – called Magnetite - opened the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra’s Capital of Culture season with principal conductor Vasily Petrenko earlier in the year.

"My techniques are derived in part from mathematical principles, which is not surprising as I studied maths as an undergraduate," said Emily. "But intuition also plays an important role in the creative process."

"Magnetite is dedicated to my 93-year-old grandmother who has lived in Liverpool for most of her life. She was a chemist – so as Magnetite is the oldest known magnetic substance - it’s very appropriate that I wrote this piece for her."

Meanwhile members of the University’s Wind Orchestra have won their way into the finals of the National Concert Band Festival, after winning the regional final.

The group – which includes University members from across the NorthWest – will compete for the top prize in Cardiff in April.
Manchester gets £20 million for science training

The University has been awarded £20 million as part of a national drive to train a new wave of scientists and engineers.

The funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is part of a £250 million initiative, which will establish 44 centres for doctoral training across the UK over five years.

These centres will tackle some of the biggest problems currently facing Britain such as climate change, energy, ageing population and high-tech crime. And they are set to provide a radical alternative to the traditional ‘lone scholar’ PhD route.

The University will lead three of the training centres - including one for Nanoscience, an industrial training centre for Nuclear Engineering, and a training centre for nuclear fission research - which will all be run in partnership with other universities.

In addition a training centre for advanced metallic systems which is being led by the University of Sheffield will be run in partnership with The University of Manchester.

Professor Nigel Vincent, Associate Vice-President for Graduate Education at the University, said: “The linking of world-class research and world-class doctoral education is key to The University of Manchester’s vision.

“Our success in the doctoral training centres competition both recognises and advances that ambition.

“This success will allow us to build stronger and better links at graduate level both with other leading national and international institutions and with industry.”

The EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training have been described as "a bold new approach" to training PhD students, creating communities of researchers working on current and future challenges.

Professor Vincent added: “The training centres are a key component of the newly formed Manchester Doctoral College, which will enhance Manchester’s position as a leader in graduate education both nationally and internationally.”

Minister of State for Science and Innovation Lord Drayson, who announced the new centres, said: "Britain faces many challenges in the 21st century and needs scientists and engineers with the right skills to find answers to these challenges, build a strong economy and keep us globally competitive.

“EPSRC’s doctoral training centres will provide a new wave of engineers and scientists to do the job.

“These new centres will help to develop clean renewable energy, fight high tech crime, assist in reducing carbon emissions, and discover new healthcare solutions for an ageing population.

“This is an exciting, innovative approach to training young researchers and will help build a better future for Britain.”

In brief

£5 million for graphene research

Experts at the University have been awarded £5 million to research uses for graphene.

The new ‘super carbon’ was discovered in Manchester in 2004 and its electronic properties have already led to research into its use as a possible replacement for sensors, transistors and semi-transistors.

Researchers believe graphene may have uses in many other areas. And the Centre for Innovation Through Materials Science, Chemistry and Engineering will examine possible applications in relation to material science, chemistry and engineering.

The University has been awarded the £5 million – jointly with Lancaster University – as part of the EPSRC 2008 Science and Innovation Awards.

Social Statistics Launch

The new discipline area of Social Statistics, within the School of Social Sciences, has been launched at the University with a one-day event.

The launch – ‘Social Statistics in Manchester’ – featured a number of talks on themes of social statistics relating to the discipline, the School, the University and the city.

And the aim of the event – which also included visiting Professor Ray Chambers – was designed to generate further interest in the field.

It also set out to demonstrate the breadth of statistical work, the applications of statistics across the University to topics as diverse as ethnicity, social change, social networks, confidentiality and privacy, and the use of social statistics in a local authority context.

University Challenge

Manchester has reached the semi-finals of University Challenge for the fifth year in a row.

The team - consisting of captain Matthew Yeo (PhD in the History of the Book), Simon Baker (Politics and Modern History), Henry Pertinez (PhD in Pharmacokinetics) and Reuben Roy (Medicine) - beat LSE in the quarter finals by a score of 210-165. In the semi-finals – which will be broadcast on BBC2 on Monday 9 February, 2009 - they will face Lincoln College, Oxford.
Researchers from the University are scrutinising the way birds breathe to help farmers breed fit, healthy turkeys with bigger, juicier breast meat.

Dr Jonathan Codd and Dr Peter Tickle, from the Faculty of Life Sciences, are studying changes in breathing mechanics in developing birds and hope their findings will ensure healthy turkeys grow more efficiently.

In particular they are looking at the uncinate processes - the bony levers which extend off the ribs and which help the birds to breathe.

Working in collaboration with Aviagen Turkeys Ltd (ATL), they have already found that the levers are essential to the breathing mechanism of birds as they facilitate movements of the ribs and sternum.

They have found the hardening of the levers from cartilage to bone is linked to the onset of air breathing and increases in muscle mass.

Material scientists have developed a way of making wrapping paper – from feathers.

The team from the School of Materials – led by Professor Chris Carr – began the process by breaking down and filtering large amounts of duck, goose and poultry feathers.

Then they used special machinery – unique to the University – to turn the feathery pulp into the innovative paper.

According to the National Farmers’ Union (NFU), 10 million turkeys are consumed in the UK over the festive Christmas period alone. But the vast majority of feathers plucked from these birds are incinerated or end up in landfill.

As well as paper, scientists at the University have been able to use feathers to make egg boxes and plant pots that are potentially flame retardant and more biodegradable than traditional plastic plant pots.

Researchers believe these feather-based pots may also offer enhanced fertilising properties as a result of the nitrogen supplied by the protein in the feathers.

Professor Chris Carr, said: “We are very excited and encouraged by our results and the prototypes we have produced, although there is still some way to go before products start to appear on the shelves.

“We see this as a real opportunity to put large volumes of poultry feathers to good use.”

The University is now working with industrial partners to develop the necessary processes and technology to produce commercially viable feather-based products.
Researchers from the School of Environment and Development, led by the Brooks World Poverty Institute (BWPI), have been in Bangladesh to launch an annual ‘conversation’ event with those living in extreme poverty.

The ‘Rajendrapur Conversation’, named after the area of Dhaka where it was held, was carried out by the University, in partnership with one of the world’s largest NGOs, BRAC.

As part of the project those living in the area – which is one of the poorest in the world - were asked how adaptation of their homes and livelihoods could help them withstand the effects of climate change.

BWPI was accompanied on the trip by experts from Eco Cities, based at the Manchester Architecture Research Centre, to help draw up an action plan and a series of pilot projects – which, if successful, could be scaled up across urban Bangladesh through donor aid.

There are plans to repeat the ‘Conversation’ event in different countries each year. And the wider aim of the initiative is to launch a strategic global partnership between those living in poverty and world-class research to help eradicate poverty.

Meanwhile, in Manchester, BWPI and WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment, Globalising and Organising) have held a panel discussion on ‘New Perspectives on Informality’.

Informal workers – including self-employed, street vendors, domestic employees and day labourers – often work long hours, in hazardous conditions and for low pay. They constitute the majority of the labour force in developing countries.

The event, at the University, looked at the role of urban planning policies in reducing social exclusion against informal workers, trade policy, migration, and social protection, as well as the need to incorporate informality into international policy.

The team of academics looked at the varied uses of drama as a medium of learning and interpretation in museums and historic sites.

They found that it had the power to reveal and provoke active engagement with the hidden stories and people behind the exhibits on show.

But they also found that the success of the projects depended on the reaction of visitors, how well they were prepared and particularly whether they were willing to make the transition from ‘visitor’ to ‘audience’.

The research findings have been published in a report, with an accompanying DVD. Professor Jackson says they will have implications for the future professional practice of educational theatre in museums.

Professor Jackson said: “The findings from the research are many, and they raise some important questions about the impact of drama in museum settings upon a range of audiences.

“At its best, museum performance has value and long-term impact. It enhances the visitor’s appreciation and critical understanding of the subject in question and can engender empathy with other life experiences from history.

“But the research also shows that the quality of a visitor’s experience is governed by a complex array of factors, personal, cultural, institutional.

“It is in the detailed understanding of the transitions and oscillations that take place between ‘visitor’, ‘audience’, ‘participant’ and ‘learner’, where the research has been most productive.”

Details of how to order the report and DVD can be found on the PLH website below.
Profile

Many people born in the New York borough of the Bronx, have immigrant parents or grandparents, and grow up with a feeling for people crossing borders and putting down roots yet keeping their ties to far away families or homelands. But few such people are inspired to build on that experience and become one of the world’s experts on transnational migration.

Professor Nina Glick Schiller, Director of the Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures (RICC) of the Faculty of Humanities and an anthropologist with an international reputation, is such a person. Her grandparents were part of that mighty migration which took them from Eastern Europe to the United States to start a new life.

“I was always drawn to the human experience of migration and cities,” she says. “When I discovered anthropology at university, it was love at first sight, a calling if you like. My commitment was immediate and has remained so. But in those days anthropologists were not very interested in international migration. It’s very different now – there’s a great demand.”

That commitment evolved into a labour of love that changed the academic world by, in effect, establishing a new discipline. Together with two like-minded women living near one another in the Bronx, Nina decided to write a book about the subject.

“We worked on it at night and in the early hours of the morning for more than five years,” she recalls. “We used to throw pebbles at each other’s windows to wake our writing partner up without waking up the children. But we knew that we had to get the book written.”

The result was Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States, published in 1994 by Gordon & Breach. It took off, went round the world and established itself as a classic. Nina wrote it with her friends Linda Basch and Christine Szanton Blanc. The fact that she had taken up an academic post at the University of New Hampshire helped them to get some academic credibility – and get the book published. “I have been writing about the subject ever since,” she says modestly.

But her interests are widespread. As an undergraduate at New York University, she did three majors – Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science. And she also had a keen interest in public health.

“I’ve been interdisciplinary from the very beginning,” she says. “I’ve read the literature and I...
the Cornerhouse and an art exhibit at the Victoria Baths, the festival will cover such topics as Migration and Belonging, Common Places and Imagined Politics and it will feature debates, workshops, new writings and exhibitions.

Cosmopolitanism can mean different things to different people, but it certainly embraces the world and a freedom from national limitations and prejudices. It is clearly highly relevant to current challenges associated with immigration, racialism, minorities and divisions in our cities.

"The term goes back to the Stoics and the Greeks," says Nina. "There are many definitions. We use the word, but also question it. I'm interested in the definition that identifies those people who are open to the world and wish to break down barriers, without denying their own distinct identity or way of being.

"There is a myth that there is such a thing as homogeneity and uniformity across national territory. This pretence of homogeneity causes local people to blame everything on the foreigners.

"In fact, there is already a multiplicity of identities within a nation. Immigrants add to the mix and it is not possible for them to live in a new place and not change or cause change."

For that reason, she is delighted to be living in Manchester: "If you walk in the city and see it with fresh eyes, it's quite remarkable. You see people from different cultures hanging out together." She and Stephen live in Old Trafford, which she describes as "quite wonderful", because of its cultural mix.

Nina has also always been a great believer in community involvement. In New York City she has, for instance, worked over the years with convicted arsonists, people with AIDS, the homeless, mentally ill and family support groups in a South Bronx housing project. In New Hampshire she worked with immigrants and refugees from all over the world.

"I have always believed in doing research with community involvement," she says.

When she was doing her PhD at Columbia, more than 30 years ago, she studied how institutions in New York City encouraged immigrants from Haiti to organize as a separate ethnic community. At that time there were only five Haitian organisations - 20 years later there were more than 100.

When she began she says there were no jobs for Caribbeanists, since the region was seen as hybrid in culture and therefore not meriting study. Now the Caribbean is the source of major research themes, including diaspora, transnationalism, hybridity and creole cultures.

But of course, Nina points out, there is no such thing as a pure culture. Every culture is a constantly changing mixture.

To say that no-one could be better qualified, in experience and attitude, to lead the venture of this new Institute is stating the obvious. You could say, to use her word, it's a calling.
Courses for the Public

Thurs 19 Feb, 7pm, £7
Roscoe Lecture, A Stroke of Bad Luck: Understanding Brain Disease
Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell
An insight into the astonishing discoveries that have been made in neuroscience over recent years by one of the University’s most popular and accessible speakers.
Sat 7 Feb, 10am-4pm, £45
Edward Carpenter: Rebel against Victorian Values
Professor Sheila Rowbotham, renowned socialist feminist, theorist and writer, will lead this exciting day focusing on the life and radical politics of the gay activist, poet and social philosopher who was a leading figure in the late 19th/early 20th century Britain.
Sat 7 Feb, 10am-4pm, £45
Palaeontology – Biomechanics, Tracks and Traces
Peter Fellingham
This day school will provide an overview of how modern methods, predominantly taken from the engineering fields, can be applied to palaeontological problems to understand extinct life.
Sat 21 Feb, 10am-4pm, £45
Plants Past and Present
Dr Susannah Lydon
A hands-on day school that uses fossil evidence to track the history of plant life on earth from its origin in the ocean. It will explain and illustrate the major evolutionary events that created the extraordinary diversity of plant life on this planet and place many familiar modern plants in the context of geological time.
Sat 21 Feb, 10am-4pm, £45
Gender Jokes and Brain Studies
Dr Pete Mann
How do recent findings about the brain’s architecture and how sex differences help explain very small – yet noteworthy - differences in the neurology between girls and boys growing up to behave as men and women.
Sat 21 Feb, 10am-4pm, £45
Girl with a Pearl Earring
Crema Mansfield and Christine Musgrove
Vermeer: Painting Girl with a Pearl Earring inspired the novel of the same name which in turn was made into a film. This day school will explore the relationship between Vermeer’s paintings and Tracy Chevalier’s interpretation of his life in 17th century Delft. 10% discount for staff on all our course and day schools For a full list of all our courses and an application form please visit our website or call us in our Reception, 10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday Pre-enrolment is required. We do not accept telephone bookings. Bursaries are available for those on low income.

Contact Theatre

Small Worlds – A Short Adventure For One
Tues 3 Feb – Sat 7 Feb, 3:30-5.30pm and 7:30-9.30pm, (£8/£5)
An interactive show for one - with live performance, music & digital projection.
Contact Young Tech Team
Mon 9 Feb, 7pm, Free
Giving young people the opportunity to learn from Contact’s professional technicians.
Monday Drop
Mon 9 Feb, 7pm, Free
Drop-in performance and writing workshops for young people led by professionals.
Song of Songs by Sonia Hughes
Wed 11 Feb – Sat 21 Feb, 8pm, £10/£6
An exploration of love from the writer of Quarantine’s Susan and Darren. BSL performance 20 February.
Bollywood to Go
Thurs 12 & Fri 13, £6/£4
A selection of films and workshops to accompany the Bollywood Stills exhibition.
Raw Jam: Seductive Shakespeare
Fri 13 Feb, 7pm, Free
A free afternoon of unadulterated passion to kick-start the Valentine’s weekend.
Love for All
Sat 14 Feb, 9pm, £10/£6
Acclaimed performance artist David Hoyle invites you to an alternative Valentine’s experience.
Open Stage Week
Mon 16 – Sat 21 Feb, Free
Join us for a week of events to launch the Free Ticket initiative.
Venus and the Killer Bees
Fri 20 Feb, 8pm, £6/£4
Work-in-progress of a brand-new dancehall musical, Venus and the Killer Bees.
Henri Ougié Dance Company 10th Anniversary Tour
Thurs 26 Feb, 8pm, £10/£6
A retrospective of work by award-winning choreographer Henri Ougié. Live music by Pablo Quartet.
Verbally Challenged
Wed 4 March, 7.30pm, £5
Five writers compete for your vote in order to win £100.

Contact Manchester Museum

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Lindow Man: A Bog Body Mystery until 19 April
The discovery of a preserved body of a man in a peat bog at Lindow Moss, Cheshire, in 1984. Seven different people provide a range of perspectives on the life and death of a man who returned to us after nearly 2,000 years.
Lindow Moss: A Place of Finding until 19 April
This photographic exhibition documents the landscape at Lindow Moss, the mysterious place where the preserved body of Lindow Man was found.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Darwin’s Big Birthday Bash
Sat 14 Feb, 11am-4pm
Celebrate the 200th birthday of Charles Darwin in this fun-packed activity day. To find out more, visit our website.
February Half-term – Lindow Man Mania
Mon 16 – Fri 20 Feb, 11am-4pm
Come along for a week of Lindow Man related activities. To find out more, visit our website.
Magic Carpet: Polar Bear, Polar Bear
Fri 27 Feb, 11am-12noon
Storytelling activity session for the under fives.
Big Saturday: Scientastic
Sat 7 Mar, 11am-4pm
Celebrate National Science and Engineering Week and meet scientists from The University of Manchester.

TALKS AND TOURS

A Medical History of Egypt in Museum Collections
Wed 4 Feb, 3-5pm, FREE
With Jackie Campbell, KNH Centre for Biomedical Egyptology. (Drop-in).

Spring Festival Walk on Lindow Moss
Sat 7 Feb, 2-4pm, £3
Visit the mysterious place where Lindow Man was found. Book on 0161 275 2648, 10a.

Ideas Café: DNA and the Ancient World
Mon 23 Feb, 6-8pm, FREE
Explore how biomolecular science can be used to find out more about the lives of ancient people with Terry Brown. Book on 0161 275 2648

MANCHESTER CAFÉ SOCIETY

Manchester’s Café Society is a place where, for the price of a glass of wine or a cup of coffee, anyone can explore the latest ideas in science, culture and the arts. Talks are either in the café or the Museum’s Discovery Centre.

Opening hours
Open: Tues-Sat 10am - 5pm
Sun-Mon (and Bank Holidays) 11am - 4pm
FREE Admission

The Manchester Museum
Oxford Road, Manchester
0161 275 2634
www.manchester.ac.uk/museum

Gig Guide

MANCHESTER ACADEMY 1, 2 and 3
Wed 4 Feb - £8 Adv
Wed 4 Feb - £10 Adv
Thurs 5 Feb - £10 Adv
Sat 7 Feb - £15 Adv
Sun 8 Feb - £8 Adv
Mon 9 Feb - £13 Adv
Wed 11 Feb - £8 Adv
Thurs 12 Feb - £10.50 Adv
Fri 13 Feb - £8 Adv
Sat 14 Feb - £10 Adv
Fri 20 Mar - £12.50 Adv
Tickets from:
Students’ Union, Oxford Road
Piccadilly Box Office @ easy internet Café (cc)
0871 2200260
Royal Court (Liverpool) 0151 709 4321 (c/c)
Students’ Union
Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
0161 275 2930
www.manchesteracademy.net

What’s On
Music and Drama at Manchester

Thurs 5 Feb, 1.10pm, A Breath Between Two Worlds: Gavin Osborn (flute and bass flute)
A recital exploring the inspirational role of the breath in contemporary flute music.
Sat 7 Feb, 7.30pm, The University of Manchester Sinfonietta
The University of Manchester student-led orchestra presents a night of Classical masterpieces showcasing the exquisite playing of award-winning pianist Sebastian Grand. Haydn’s dramatic 103rd symphony ends the night – and by the time he’d written 102 he had gotten pretty good at it!
Thurs 19 Feb, 2.30pm, Free Quartuor Daniel Lunchtime Concert
The young Webern's romantic slow movement precedes a major premiere for the University's senior lecturer Kevin Malone. The Danels’ Beethoven cycle continues with a quartet that has struck awe into audiences and composers down the ages.
Thurs 26 Feb, 1.10pm, Free Mozart and Friends: Rhapsody String Quartet
Today’s programme, played on historical instruments, is inspired by an 18th-century chamber music gathering of composers.

Chaplaincies

St Peter’s House Chaplaincy
11am Holy Communion
12.15am Bible Study
12.45am Lunch (1st Sunday) 6.30pm Evening Worship (term-time only)
FOYER 10am - 5pm
An area where students and staff can relax and meet friends. A tea/coffee machine is available. Precinct Centre 0161 275 2894 email sph.reception@manchester.ac.uk
RC Chaplaincy Avila House
Mass Times (term-time only)
SUNDAY: 7pm (in the Holy Name Church) next door to Chaplaincy
Mon, Wed, Fri: 6pm in the Chaplaincy Chapel
Tues, Thurs: 12.15pm in the Chaplaincy Chapel
Oxford Road (opposite the Students’ Union)
0161 273 1465 email info/rc-chaplaincy-um.org.uk
www.rc-chaplaincy-um.org.uk
The Jewish Student Centre and Synagogue
Hillel House, Greenheys Lane
0161 226 1139 email rabbily@hotmail.com
www.rabbily.com

International Society

Centre for New Writing
Thurs 12 Feb 6.30pm, Martin Harris Centre, E153
Martin Amis Public Event, Literature and Britishness, with Howard Jacobson
Martin Amis and Manchester's Howard Jacobson will discuss how the novel represents the nation, and how ideas of 'Britishness' have altered over the past half-century.

North West Arts Centre

Martin Harris Centre, E153
Launch of the Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures (RICC), Jackie Kay and Joe Pemberton
Kay's poetry collection was Saltire Society Scottish First Book of the Year, and her debut novel won the Guardian Fiction prize. NA alumna Pemberton's novel describes 1960s Manchester through a child's eyes.
The Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama
Bridgeford Street, Manchester M13 9PL
0161 275 8951/8950
email boxoffice@manchester.ac.uk
www.manchester.ac.uk/martinharriscentre

The Whitworth Art Gallery
DISPLAYS/COLLECTIONS
Subversive Spaces, Surrealism and Contemporary Art
The familiar spaces of The Whitworth Art Gallery are disturbed and subverted by this major exhibition, which traces the affinities between the work of historical Surrealist artists and visual culture today.

Putting on the Glitz, wallpapers and wall coverings with that extra something until Oct Traditionally, wall coverings incorporating precious metals could only be afforded by the wealthy. For those aspiring to wealth, such luxury was highly desirable. Putting on the Glitz explores how this desire has been (and can still be) satisfied, both by the real thing and extremely effective imitations.

Some Smaller Things until Summer 2009
Inspired by, and acting as a counterpart to, the iconic status of Stonehenge, a new selection has been drawn from the Whitworth’s collection of drawings and prints.

Art and Labour’s Cause is One, Walter Crane and Manchester 1880-1915 until Sept
The exhibition features items such as book illustrations, political cartoons, socialist emblems and works of art.

Agents of Change until Summer 2009
The Whitworth has recently purchased the final edition of Lynne Hershman Leeson’s most significant work of art, the 172 item Roberta Breitmore made between 1974 and 1978. A small collection of this work will be shown alongside five newly acquired monoprints by Tracey Emin.

EVENTS
Colourful Sundays
Every Sunday 1.30pm - 3.30pm, Family Friendly, FREE
Drop into the gallery any Sunday afternoon for free and fun creative activities at Colourful Sundays. Suitable for all ages, no need to book.

Tuesday Talks
Every Tues 11am -12.30pm, FREE
Each week an artist, thinker or critic talks about their work, influences and inspirations.

Magical Mobiles
Wed 18 Feb & Fri 20 Feb 1.30-3.30pm, FREE
Create your own magical mobile with your family to hang up at home.

Glitz Magnets
Thurs 19 & Sat 21 Feb 1.30-3.30pm, FREE
Suitable for all ages, create your own magical glitz magnets to take home.

European Textiles
Sat 7 Feb 1.30-3.30pm
Bring your family and join us to explore and celebrate cultures from around the world through storytelling, art activities and even tasting food snacks.

Collection Exhibitions Archive Now Online
The Whitworth's online 'Collections Catalogue' now allows you to browse and search selected exhibitions held at the Gallery over the past 10 years. Follow the link from homepage at:
www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

The Whitworth Art Gallery
Oxford Road, Manchester 0161 275 7450 email whitworth@manchester.ac.uk

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www.manchester.ac.uk
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*Terms & conditions apply.
To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, Manchester Museum is hosting ‘Darwin’s Big Birthday Bash’.

The event on Saturday, 14 February 2009 – two days after Darwin’s birthday – will include live performances, a recreation of Darwin’s famous ‘worm charming’ experiment and science experiments.

There will be live Brazilian music from Juba do Leao, puppet storytelling and craft activities. There will even be the chance to help create a giant tortoise (pictured) – in recognition of the role the animals played in Darwin’s research.

Museum and University experts will be on hand throughout the day to talk about their work on a wide range of subjects from carnivorous plants to dinosaurs. There will also be opportunities to get close to specimens that Darwin collected during his famous voyage on the ‘Beagle’.

This event is a taster for the Museum’s ‘Darwin Festival’ which starts in August 2009. The festival will explore Darwin’s life and work, present the evidence for evolution, explain how science works and encourage people to reflect on issues arising from Charles Darwin’s work and its legacy.

Three new exhibitions will explore these themes:
• Nature Discovery, an activity space for families (opening August)
• Charles Darwin: evolution of a scientist, with a fantastic selection of objects interpreted in a graphic novel style (opening October)
• a collection of breathtaking photographs of South American wildlife and landscapes by local photographer Ben Hall

The festival will include lots of events and activities, some of which have been developed in partnership with BBSRC and the Wellcome Trust.

Meanwhile, the Museum has launched an appeal for an artist to live as a hermit in its splendid Victorian Gothic building.

In complete isolation, the hermit will be expected to reflect on topical issues including biodiversity, climate change, extinctions and the future of the planet, drawing inspiration from the Museum’s collection.

The hermitage will run for a period of up to 8 weeks between May and July 2009.