Welcome back from the summer break to a particularly busy start of the academic year; and a particular welcome to the new cohort of postgraduate researchers, including twenty RCUK-funded students, who took part in Liverpool Doctoral College’s Postgraduate Researcher Week. We also look forward to welcoming PhD students as part of the newly re-commissioned ESRC North West Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership, and congratulations to all those involved in that successful bid.

Following the well-attended ‘Making an Impact’ event with the Chair of the International Development Select Committee, Stephen Twigg MP, as guest speaker, the Faculty will host a Global Challenges Research Fund workshop (details below), which I’m sure will also be well-attended by researchers across the university.

I’d like to introduce our new Research and Impact Manager, Nicky Schofield, who joined the team in September. I’ll soon be handing over the reins as APVC for Research to Professor Georgina Enfield, who will join us in January.

Professor Barry Godfrey

Introducing Dr Matthew Fitzjohn: Lecturer in Archaeology – Grand Designs in Ancient Greece

Dr Matthew Fitzjohn is based in the Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology. His research, which focuses on ancient Greek domestic architecture, examines ideas of embodied learning and the role of bodily practices on identity formation. He is currently writing a monograph on how the tasks of daily life, and experiences in the home, caused bodily transformations that affected people's quality of life and altered perceptions of self, and the economic productivity of the household.

Matthew is also working on his AHRC-funded project, Grand Designs in Ancient Greece, with Post-doctoral Research Associate Peta Bulmer. Working with primary and secondary schools in Liverpool, Sheffield, Coventry, Worcester and Brighton, they are developing cross-curricular lessons and activities which take Matthew’s research on Ancient Greece into schools.

One of the drivers in the development of this project was the success of teaching an undergraduate third year module on Classical houses and households. Students examined Classical houses to explore broad ranging themes including display and consumption, hygiene and sanitation, gendered spaces in the home and identity formation. Students used Lego Digital Designer and SketchUp Make to create reconstructions, analyse household assemblages, and discussion boards and group blogs to communicate within the cohort.

One of the main activities of the Grand Designs in Ancient Greece project has been the creation of an online package of classroom resources, focusing on activities involving Lego and Lego Education Story Starter. These resources are used by teachers to encourage students to develop their knowledge of Archaeology and Ancient Greece, as well as enhancing their literacy, communication, and numeracy skills, through activities that encourage social and object play.

For example, students are building Lego models of real Ancient Greek houses and using their learnt knowledge of daily life in Ancient Greece to write stories, create animated storyboards and stop-motion films. By designing and costing mosaics using Lego tiles, and analysing the geometrical features of the architecture, students learn about Ancient Greek art and architecture as well problem-solving maths activities that enhance skills of numeracy, measurement and comprehension of scale.

Initial feedback from schools indicates that the lesson plans and activities have already contributed significantly to students’ engagement with complex ideas, and with subject matter across the curriculum. Further details of the project can be found on the RCUK web page.

‘Making an Impact’ series: International Influence

International Influence was the first event of this year’s ‘Making an Impact’ series. This event took place on 13th October to promote the opportunities for research collaboration and impact in developing countries, highlighting the opportunities and methods for informing policymakers about research relevant to international development. Slides and videos are available on www.liv.ac.uk/hss-impact.

The 'Making an Impact' series was conceived as a resource to support researchers in all aspects of the impact agenda. Look out for future events and research funding opportunities every week in the Faculty Bulletin and on Twitter @livuniHSS.
Global Challenges Research Fund workshop

In the context of a rapidly changing and uncertain research funding landscape, the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) presents a fantastic opportunity for researchers from across the University to align their expertise to secure part of the £1.5 billion available over the next five years. Announced as part of the Government’s 2015 spending review, it forms part of the UK’s Official Development Assistance commitment, to support cutting-edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries. It will be administered through delivery partners including the Research Councils and national academies.

The Faculty is hosting an event to focus on the funding opportunities available through the GCRF. Keynote speaker at the event will be Professor Alan Winters (University of Sussex) who is a member of the RCUK GCRF Strategic Advisory Group and this will be an opportunity to learn more about GCRF funding, which challenge areas the Fund will focus on, which countries are eligible etc. There will also be presentations outlining the support and structures available at the University and how to prepare for GCRF funding calls.

Commenting on the event, Professor Dinah Birch, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Impact, said: “As the research funding landscape changes in the wake of Brexit, the Global Challenges Research Fund, which will allocate £1.5 billion over the next five years, represents a major opportunity for the University. Professor Alan Winters, who has generously agreed to speak at this event, sits on the national GCRF Strategic Group, and we are exceptionally fortunate to have the opportunity to benefit from his expertise."

This event will take place on 27th October 2016, 10am-12pm in The Chapel, Foresight Centre and is open to researchers, PhD students and professional services staff across the University, please book via Eventbrite.

The Being Human Festival returns

The University of Liverpool has been selected to be one of the ‘hub’ venues for this year’s Being Human Festival. Between 17th – 25th November 2016, the Faculty will be hosting a series of events exploring this year’s festival theme of Fears of the past, hopes for the future.

Events will include:
- Writing a History of the Future
- Mermaids!
- Connecting Cultures: British Women Explorers
- Human Zoos: Putting People on Display
- Roald Dahl’s Marvellous Medicine
- Modern Ghost Stories

For full details and bookings, please visit www.liv.ac.uk/being-human or follow @LivHuman.

Congratulations to...

The Institute of Cultural Capital at Liverpool in collaboration with 17 other partner Universities and organisations has been selected to lead the UK ESRC scoping review on ‘Ways of Being in a Digital Age’ (worth £330k). This scoping review will inform potential future ESRC initiatives in this area. It will provide an holistic view of how digital technology mediates our lives, and of the way technological and social change co-evolve and impact on each other. Professor Simeon Yates (Director Institute of Cultural Capital and Department of Communication and Media), Professor Claire Taylor (Modern Languages and Cultures) and Professor Simon Maskell (Computer Science) are the three Liverpool academics involved in the project. Find out more on the project’s website.

Dr Jorge Hernandez (Management School) is leading a €1.3m international project, ‘Enhancing and implementing knowledge based ICT solutions within high risk and uncertain conditions for agriculture production systems (RUC-APS)’, funded by an EU Horizon 2020 grant. Commenting on the project, Jorge said ‘Over the past five to ten years, weather conditions around the world have been quite unstable. This makes it hard to plan production of agriculture...our agriculture experts will be looking at sample locations and sample product to try and predict what is going to happen.’

Dr Beatriz Garcia (Head of Research, Institute of Cultural Capital and Senior Research Fellow, Communication and Media) has been awarded £45k from the British Council to conduct the assessment of Shakespeare Lives, a programme of international events and activities celebrating Shakespeare’s work on the 400th anniversary of his death in 2016. Dr Garcia, who specialises in research on the development and longitudinal impact of cultural programmes and events, will lead three regional and country case studies to assess the impact of the programme in Russia, China and the Horn of Africa. The focus will be interrogating the effect of Shakespeare Lives on perceptions of the UK across these world areas. Findings will be presented in a final report to be published in March 2017.

Professor Larry Barham (Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology) has been funded by the AHRC for his project Investigating the Deep Roots of Human Behaviour, worth £900k. The project asks when did human ancestors start behaving like us? It will investigate behavioural developments attributed to ancestral human species, Homo heidelbergensis, which lived in Africa600,000-200,000 years ago. It will focus on one area of south-central Africa (Zambia) where there is the potential to generate new data on the behaviour of this species.

Contact us about the newsletter

We would like to share news that is of interest to you so please let us know if you, or your colleagues, have success stories to share, or upcoming events. Please get in touch with Maeva (maeva.zimmermann@liv.ac.uk).