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Campus round-up

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2 February 2012

Manchester Metropolitan University

Now dig this

Members of the public have been invited to take part in an archaeological dig on the site of a university's new campus. The project at Manchester Metropolitan University aims to unearth the city's medieval past buried beneath Birley Fields, a brownfield site to which the university plans to move by 2014. Faye Simpson, lecturer in archaeology at the university, is leading the project. She said: "There is very little physical mark of Manchester's medieval past, so we are hoping to find some unique evidence of the city before the Industrial Revolution." Volunteers will receive half a day's training before getting involved.

University of Ulster

Troubles marked and mapped

Memorials created during the Troubles in Northern Ireland have been mapped on an interactive database that is available to the public. Researchers from the University of Ulster's Magee campus have used Google Earth, Google Street View and Second Life to build a map that illuminates spatial aspects of the conflicts. Gillian Robinson, professor of social research, said the project has "highlighted some differences in the way the various groups have commemorated their dead" and has allowed researchers to analyse where killings had been concentrated.

Bangor University

A manageable condition

A research project has been launched that aims to find out how children and young people can manage epilepsy. The work will be supervised by two academics from Bangor University - Jane Noyes, professor in the School of Healthcare Sciences, and Richard Hastings, professor in the School of Psychology. It will develop an evidence base that health staff can use to determine

a place of mind
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how to intervene in the behaviour of those with epilepsy, with the aim of teaching them how to manage the condition themselves.

University of East London

Out on the pitch

Homophobia in sport is being tackled by a joint venture between a university and the National Union of Students. The University of East London has said that it is the first UK university to get involved with the Out in Sport project and the first to sign the government's charter to address the problems of homophobia and transphobia in the sporting world. At this year's graduation ceremonies, UEL awarded an honorary doctorate to Aslie Pitter, a player with Stonewall FC, a team from the gay-rights lobbying group.

University of Worcester

Help for a long shot

A university has boosted one of its student's Olympic ambitions with a scholarship. Jason Copsey, a third-year environment management student at the University of Worcester, has been awarded £500 to help with training costs. The 20-year-old javelin thrower is ranked second in Wales and 38th in the UK, with a personal best of 62m. He said: "I'm travelling to Cheltenham (for coaching) twice a week, which gets pretty expensive, I was working part-time, but now that I'm in my final year of my degree it was getting really difficult to juggle my studies, training and a job, so this scholarship is a massive help."

Royal Holloway, University of London

To never forget

An institute attached to a US university has granted a UK institution exclusive access to its library of 52,000 video interviews with Holocaust survivors and witnesses. The partnership between the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute and Royal Holloway, University of London was announced to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. Most of the testimonies come from Jewish survivors, but there are also accounts from homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies and political prisoners who survived the camps, in addition to tales from rescuers, aid providers and participants in the war crimes trials. David Cesarani, from Royal Holloway's history department, said: "These real-life accounts of Holocaust victims' stories will help to ensure that the horrors, but also the many acts of kindness and bravery in the face of such adversity, are never forgotten."

University of Edinburgh

Blind computing, safe computing

Next-generation quantum computers can process individuals' data remotely with no risk of the information being accessed via the machines, researchers have claimed. Elham Kashefi, a lecturer from the University of Edinburgh's School of Informatics, was part of an international team that found that it is possible to encrypt data and send it for computation on a different server without the remote computer being able to read the data. This could pave the way for secure quantum super-computers that do the processing of home and office computers remotely, without any security risk.

University of Leeds

Growth and longevity

It is often argued that improving human well-being requires growth in carbon emissions as well as economic activity. Now a team of UK, US, Austrian and Norwegian scientists led by the University of Leeds has challenged that view. Countries with the lowest carbon emissions had the lowest incomes, and the highest life expectancies are found in places with a wide range of emissions, from 0.5 tonnes per capita (Costa Rica) to 6.2 (US). Julia Steinberger, lecturer in ecological economics at Leeds, said: "Since countries exist with the same life expectancies as the UK and the US but with a small fraction of their carbon emissions (and incomes), prioritising economic growth at the expense of climate stability seems less and less defensible."

University of Warwick

Chinese get professional polish

The number of Chinese executives enrolled on a university's professional programmes has more than doubled in a year. In 2010-11, 160 Chinese executives, supported by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, were on courses run by WMG at the University of Warwick, up from 60 the previous year. Lord Bhattacharyya, chairman and founder of WMG, said the executives, who come from fields as varied as oil, aviation and defence, are signing up for the courses because China is a global economy with a fast-moving technology base. "There's a huge appetite for knowledge to power that forward," he said.

Brunel University

Emissions-cutting drive

The Spanish car manufacturer Seat has been joined by a university in an attempt to create a high-tech energy management system for the automotive industry. Brunel University is taking part in the EuroEnergest project, which hopes to use an artificial intelligence-driven system to cut emissions in some areas of the industry by at least 10 per cent. Kai Cheng, head of Brunel's Advanced Manufacturing and Enterprise Engineering group and director of the university's Innovative Manufacturing Collaborative Research Network, said: "The automotive industry is one of the main industrial consumers of energy. An increase in energy efficiency by the industry during the manufacturing process would result in an important advance in energy saving and CO₂ emissions limitation."

Oxford Brookes University

Clean vroom

Cheltenham MotorSports has enlisted a university to measure the sustainability of vehicles in a forthcoming race. Oxford Brookes University is working on criteria to help judge the two-day event in which contestants will compete on sustainability and fuel efficiency as well as on speed. They will be banned from using fossil fuels. Allan Hutchinson, professor of mechanical engineering at Oxford Brookes, said: "Student engagement in competitions provides us with the opportunity to help bring e-Motorsport and low-carbon racing to the public through exhibitions and street racing. This activity will play a pivotal role in re-energising public interest in motor sport and winning potential customers for ultra-low-carbon vehicles."

Cambridge/University College London

Dive into the access waters

Simon Hughes, the government's access tsar, has joined forces with two leading universities to promote higher education to gifted applicants from poor backgrounds. The University of Cambridge is working with University College London and

Excellence in Southwark (a programme for gifted children) to launch Ambitions, a five-year scheme under which each institution will provide sessions once a term to develop writing and presentation skills. Launching the scheme, Mr Hughes compared the students on the project to divers: "You can walk backwards and not jump. You can just fall off and land with a big splash - not very beautiful. Or you can learn to dive, really well, and make the most of the opportunity of being on this springboard."

University of Bristol

Hot air or high water?

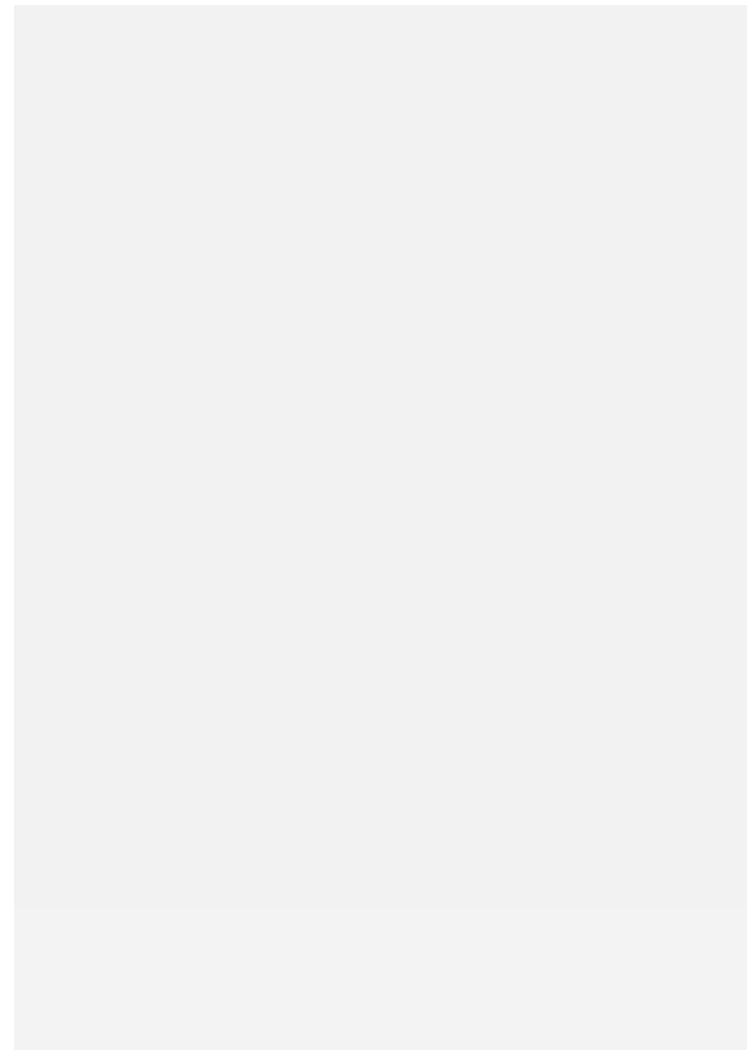
Countering climate change is more complicated than simply reducing incoming solar energy, according to research. A team of scientists from the University of Bristol and Pennsylvania State University says that controlling rising sea levels and changes in air temperature will require an elaborate balancing act. The researchers ran 120 scenarios and found that to halt or reverse rises in sea levels, the amount of solar radiation reaching Earth would need to be cut quickly. However, to do so would lead to rapid falls in air temperature. A more gradual reduction in radiation would manage air temperature but would allow a considerable rise in sea levels.

Don't forget your trunks



Art students have used an image of one of the world's last surviving elephants that helped with logging to inspire their design for a new health, leisure and research building. Second-year students at the University of Bolton have decorated the swimming area of Bolton One, which was due to open on 1 February, with a mural depicting 60-year-old Rajan the elephant, based on an

award-winning photograph (above) by Cesare Naldi. The artists, Cat Taylor Cummins and Sandra Bouguerch, completed the 8m wide, 3m high work as part of a professional development exercise that included clinching the commission by presenting their idea to Bolton One's partners: the university, Bolton Council and NHS Bolton.



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