The face behind the building: Ernest Rutherford

Oh I do like to be… beside the seaside

Canterbury Cathedral

Image: Competition winner Tarun Singh (Canterbury Cathedral central crossing ceiling)

A newsletter created by postgraduates for postgraduates
Welcome to the Spring edition of GradPost. Now that new postgraduates have settled into their lives at Kent, it’s time to get involved with student societies and workshops. Claire Powell, President of the Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSA) brings us an update on upcoming events at the University.

In keeping with the sociatal focus, Sophie Andrews encourages postgraduate sports, specifically field hockey. We also have a great article from Hannah Perrin advertising the ‘Shut Up and Write’ movement that has arrived at Kent. If you fancy learning new skills, Catherine Murphy recommends attending the Global Skills Award workshops which can be very rewarding for all taught postgraduates.

It’s not all work and no play at Kent – join Pippa Gregory as she takes you on a tour of the surrounding areas, pointing out locations of interest along the way. Finally, we take you back in time to chronicle the lives of two very influential historical icons – Ernest Rutherford (‘Father of Nuclear Physics’) and Canterbury Cathedral itself, with its storied past.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of GradPost. If you want to contribute or get in touch, visit our Facebook/Twitter pages or email gradpost@kent.ac.uk.

Chris Costa
PhD Biomedical Imaging

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Editorial

For Starters

Kent Graduate Student Association update

I was asked to write for the GradPost to update everyone on what the Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSA) has been up to so far this year.

Our Sports Officer, Charlie Betteridge, has set up a Facebook page for postgraduate sports and a badminton page which is updated regularly with our team scores. As well as this she will be setting up sports events around the Six Nations Rugby and also has some charity sports events lined up in the warmer months, so make sure you come along to those! Our Media Officer, Ilse Schooneknaep, is working towards setting up a film club which will meet every other week on Sundays to watch films in Woolf Lecture Theatre. We are also planning a ‘Postgrads as Parents’ event one Saturday afternoon in March where postgraduates will be invited to bring their children to watch kids’ films in the Woolf Academic building and chat with one another. The event will be the first of its kind and we are hoping it will be enjoyed by both parents and children alike. We would not be able to host this event without the help of our other officers Jill Hungenaert, Chen Yu and Sindhuja Maniam who have all hosted events so far this year and have offered their time and effort to getting things done. We are also looking forward to some additional events being developed by our Events Officer Nayeem Elahi this term.

As some of you may already know, over the past three years the KGSA have been working towards getting more postgraduate social space within the University. While we have been somewhat successful at this, being allowed to use Woolf Foyer on weekday nights, it has been hard to get any permanent solution to the problem.

The KGSA, with our new Campaigns Officer Vid Calovski, has been working over the last month to develop a campus-wide campaign to increase the current study and social space for postgraduates at the University. We have started a petition which you may well be asked to sign at some point so please do! We are also planning an exciting event in early March to highlight some of the problems we face and we will be giving away prizes so keep an eye out for it and come along. If anyone would like to be involved in the campaign then get in touch via our Facebook page ‘KGSA student committee 2012-2013’ or e-mail me on cp337@kent.ac.uk.

Claire Powell
President of the Kent Graduate Student Association

Fancy hockey on ‘Vensday’?

If I had a penny for every time someone has asked me ‘Do you mean ice hockey?’ I’d be rich. Apparently, no one has heard of field hockey. Well, that is to say, unless they are British, Australian or from one of the other very few countries who play this game. Be assured though, field hockey is even better than its frosty sibling. Just as dynamic, just as much exercise, just as cold (yes, we do play outside, much to the surprise of everyone I talk to), but without the added fear of having your fingers sliced in half by a pair of oversized skates when you fall over.

Anyone can play hockey. I say that; my own skills perhaps leave a little to be desired. To clarify, whether you have never played before (some have not), or last played at school (me) or are county or even GB level (some of the first team), there are plenty of opportunities for anyone to have a swing and twist of the stick. Still worried you wouldn’t be good enough? Enter Chris, the team coach. Yes, the hockey club pays for its own coach. He will have you ‘hitting’ and ‘slapping’ and ‘shooting’ the ball in no time. Just hope you’re lucky enough to get the 6pm training slot on a Monday. Those in the 9pm slot, maybe bring a coat.

Not convinced? Just wait for Wednesdays; Or Vensday, as we hockey aficionados say. A day of team matches, followed by socials that make the Olympics’ after-party look mediocre. Organised by social secs whose terrifically outrageous sense of fun will have you coming back each week for more. Feel free to join the ‘Circle’ at 7.30pm (don’t be late) in K-Bar, followed by an antic-ridden, mind-blowing night at the Venue. If that sounds good, just wait for Varsity, which is right around the corner. Not for you? Well don’t fret, there are plenty of so-called ‘low-key’ events that are equally entertaining, such as team meals and the much anticipated charity ball in March.

Hopefully this has convinced you that field hockey is the club to belong to; and for those of you thinking ‘ice hockey is so much cooler’, get yourself down to the frozen Astro pitches tonight for training. You’ll be skating in no time.

Sophie Andrews
MSc Forensic Psychology
Father of nuclear physics

The face behind the building: Ernest Rutherford

The last edition of *The GradPost* saw an article based on the life and works of Virginia Woolf, the namesake of our postgraduate college here at Kent. In this issue, we will look at Ernest Rutherford, the ‘father of nuclear physics’, and the man whom Rutherford college, Kent’s second-oldest college was named after when it opened in 1966.

Born in Nelson, New Zealand, in 1871 Rutherford was one of 12 children born to farmer James Rutherford and his wife Martha, who was a teacher. Education was of great importance to the Rutherford family, resulting in the stringent schooling of Ernest and his siblings. It was through school that his interest in science first developed, at the age of ten, when what he was learning inspired him to recreate experiments and invent his own.

Rutherford gained a BA in Mathematics and Latin, followed by an MA in Mathematics and Physics and a BSc in Geology and Chemistry, from the University of New Zealand. While there he was offered a scholarship to attend the University of Cambridge to work with Nobel Prize for Physics winner, J J Thomson. During his time at Cambridge, Rutherford discovered the existence of two different types of radioactive waves (naming them alpha and beta rays).

After completing his ground-breaking period of study at Cambridge, Rutherford briefly returned to New Zealand in 1900 to marry the daughter of his former landlady, Mary Georgina Newton, with whom he had a daughter, Eileen. He then moved to Canada to continue his research, where he discovered, among other things, the element radon. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1906, for his ‘investigations into the disintegration of the elements, and the chemistry of the radioactive substances’.

Rutherford, however, was not satisfied with this and continued making significant discoveries after receiving the award. In 1910, along with Hans Geiger and Ernest Marsden, he found – using the now famous ‘gold foil experiment’ – that at the centre of an atom is a nucleus accounting for most of the mass of the atom. This discovery is described by the Nobel Committee as ‘his greatest contribution to physics’.

With the outbreak of World War I his work took another turn leading him to focus his attentions on methods of submarine detection and underwater acoustics. However, despite his work for the war effort he also continued his own scientific research and is widely credited as being the first to split the atom in 1917, a discovery which he hailed as ‘of far greater importance than a war!’ This was the first artificially created nuclear reaction and consequently forged the new discipline of nuclear physics. His discovery paved the way for the nuclear age.

Rutherford’s later discoveries in the field of physics demonstrate his ability to work at a high level in two separate scientific fields, chemistry and physics. This interdisciplinary nature of his work was the main reason why our Rutherford College is named after him. At its foundation the University of Kent was interested in incorporating an interdisciplinary element to all degrees in order to break down the sometimes superficial boundaries between subjects. Thus Ernest Rutherford was a natural choice for the naming of a new college, being the epitome of such an interdisciplinary approach. Additionally, Rutherford had also studied at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, making it even more fitting to name a college after him.

As well as receiving many accolades in the world of science, such as his Nobel Prize, Rutherford’s works and contributions to science were recognised by wider society. He was knighted in 1914 and received a life peerage in 1931, making him Lord Rutherford of Nelson. However these honours mattered little to him and he did not like being called by his title – it is reported that he once angrily accosted a fellow scientist ‘Do you Lord me?’

What was most important to him was making scientific discoveries.

Rutherford died in 1937, and has the distinction of having his ashes buried in the nave of Westminster Abbey near the graves of other famous scientists such as Lord Kelvin and Sir Isaac Newton.

Catherine Murphy
MA Intl Security and Politics of Terror
Jay Crush
MA Politics
The Global Skills Award programme is available to all postgraduate taught students. The scheme involves a selection of workshops and lectures, administered by the Graduate School, which enable students to gain knowledge and learn important skills to improve employability, as well as general life skills.

Last term, as part of the Global Skills Award, I attended three workshops. The first was based on presentation skills, led by Jenny Wade. During the two-hour workshop, we worked in groups to discuss problems we frequently encounter with presenting, and fears that people commonly have. At the end of the two hours, each student was able to present a 90-second presentation based on a topic of their choosing and use the skills that Jenny had shown us to overcome anxiety and deliver with ease. It was definitely a worthwhile workshop!

The second workshop I attended was held by Nicola Urquhart, and discussed career management. This gave lots of tips to help with career development and job hunting. This workshop was particularly useful to the students in attendance, as most were Master’s students currently looking for entry-level jobs, and struggling with gaining the first step onto the job ladder. Nicola pointed out how useful the Careers and Employability Service is with guidance on CVs and job applications, and I have certainly followed her advice, as I am sure others have too.

The final workshop I attended last term was a leadership workshop, led by Tony Brister. The workshop focused on the importance of understanding what it is to be a leader, in terms of understanding the team which you are leading. The workshop allowed for us to work in small groups to tackle hypothetical situations and to decide how we would deal with them. Tony was very helpful, and made the workshop interesting by involving every student, and making all the activities interactive.

The Global Skills Award is a worthwhile scheme, one which I would definitely encourage students to join in the future. (Submission of applications will be available from September 2013). This term I will be attending further workshops based on different themes. If they are as successful as these three, I am sure they will be just as valuable!

For more information contact: skills@kent.ac.uk

Catherine Murphy
MA Int Security and Politics of Terror

PG Experience Award

A Cure for Procrastinitis

The ‘Shut Up and Write’ movement originated with a group of friends in San Francisco with writer’s block. The idea is very simple: the group meets for coffee, has 15 minutes to catch up, then the 30-minute countdown starts. During this period, there must be no talking, no mobile phones, and no internet access – just writing. There is then a 15-minute break and another 30-minute writing session. It doesn’t matter if your words are edited into oblivion afterwards, you just have to get them down on paper; reducing the pressure to start at the beginning, write well or in a particular style, and therefore providing a leapfrog over the ‘where-do-I-start?’ blank-page panic when those pesky words just won’t co-operate.

Academic SUAW meets have now been set up across many campuses in the US and Australia. As someone who suffers from chronic procrastinitis, I thought this was a brilliant idea, and applied for a Postgraduate Experience Award to fund a group at Kent; meeting once a month to update each other on respective projects, swap stories, targets, techniques, tips; and write – whether a thesis chapter, grant application, lit review, screenplay, research proposal, essay, code, poetry, and open to any PG student from any department. The group would book a room, provide refreshments, and organise the timers. Fortunately, the Graduate School agreed that it was a good idea.

We had our first SUAW meeting on 30th January. It was great to meet everyone – we had representatives from all three faculties and 12 different academic schools – and the free coffee and cookies were excellent brain food. I hope that productivity but for mutual support and encouragement – especially given the range of subjects and stages represented. It is uncanny how the quiet sound of people scribbling/hyping away compels you to join in – at the first meeting (two 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!) (twelve 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!) (twelve 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!) (twelve 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!) (twelve 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!) (twelve 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!) (twelve 30-minute sessions), I wrote an (unedited!)
Oh I do like to be...

Beside the seaside, and why not?

Here in Canterbury we are only five miles from the sea, and Kent has so much to offer along its coastline. When it comes to finding things to do, why not head out for a walk along the Crab and Winkle Way from the back of campus and out to Whitstable. This walk is five miles from campus and takes you through woods and along a rather peaceful track. It is commonly cycled or walked by many people so you never know who you might meet along the way, but then that tends to add to the fun of the journey. Once in Whitstable, it is a rather quaint town with a mix of the old and new along the High Street. For those who like to shop there is a little of everything, and it is advisable to take some money with you. So far as food is concerned, I have been working my way along the street trying out the different restaurants and cafés (of which there are many) and there is always something to suit. On the seafront itself, once you have gathered your handy portion of fish and chips and picked up a side of Whitstable oysters there is an old-fashioned diving helmet above a bench which should always be used for comic photo opportunities...

If Whitstable is too busy for you (and in the summer it really can be), it is possible to take a quick bus journey along the coast to Herne Bay, which in many ways is more commercial with its arcades and pavilion along the seafront. If you continue further, you come our of Herne Bay and reach the peaceful Beltinge and then Reculver – an absolute must for the avid historian with the twin towers that remain of St Mary’s Church. The use of this site dates back to Celtic and Roman history and has been in constant change since. The site is available to visit free; this is a beautiful place to travel to, and well worth the effort.

Should you wish to travel a little further, Kent has far more to offer along its coastline to tempt the intrepid. There are many beautiful sand and pebble beaches to walk along, rest by or simply sit and count the wind turbines from (or is it just me who does that?) Broadstairs, Deal and Sandwich offer instantly recognisable names, for various reasons; their history is well developed, as are their individual places of interest. Broadstairs again is another popular coastal resort to visit and buy your traditional fish and chips or ice cream and sit on the beach eating them.

Deal has its castle and is close to Dover. Sandwich can offer rides on the Riverbus, a visit to a Roman fort, secret gardens, the Guildhall, and any number of medieval churches – some such as St Mary’s offer musical events at specific times of the year. Wherever you go, a little bit of research is always advisable before you leave home, but with so much out there, why not spend a day beside the seaside, summer or winter time?

Pippa Gregory
PhD History

A quick glance at life in Cyprus

Living on a Mediterranean island such as Cyprus is really different in many ways in comparison to life in England. Since the island is not that big, having no more than 800,000 permanent residents distributed among its six cities, it is easy to drive all the way around the island in only a few hours.

The weather there is really hot especially during the summer where the temperature may rise even to 46ºC, the highest temperature recorded in the last 50 years. The island is considered as a hot spot for holidays mostly because of the sunny beaches, the clubs and the bars around the coastline. Nightlife is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and there are places for every taste, starting from small traditional taverns serving wine and local dishes and ending with the most extravagant clubs playing mainstream and electronic music.

One particular fact, however, stigmatises the island, it has the only divided capital in Europe. Since the Turkish invasion in 1974, when the Turkish troops occupied 37% of the Cypriot land, the island has been divided. Many of us, including myself, are the children of refugees who still haven’t seen our parents’ place of birth.

With regard to the education system, Cyprus has a main free university in Nicosia with some facilities in the town of Limassol. Many other private institutes have recently opened their gates offering an opportunity for the island to become an educational hot spot as well as a tourist attraction.

The locals are well known for their hospitality, one of the features that characterises the culture of the island. Cyprus has many traditional dishes known all around the world, one of these being the well-known halloumi cheese. You can also find traditional wine from local wineries or another type of a drink called ‘zivania’ which has a high quantity of alcohol and is drunk in shots. The village of Lefkara is famous for its embroidery and many other villages have characteristic little pathways covered with stones instead of tar, making this a really graphic landscape.

Danay Anaxagora
MSc Cancer Biology
Since the 12th century, pilgrims have been making their way to the famous city just to see the majestic site, yet many modern-day visitors are unaware of the darker side to the Cathedral’s history. A side which, in many ways, shaped the grand Cathedral we see today.

The first in a series of events was on a cold December evening in 1170;

‘The third knight inflicted a terrible wound as he lay prostrate. By this stroke, the crown of his head was separated from the head in such a way that the blood white with the brain, and the brain no less red from the blood, dyed the floor of the cathedral. The same clerk who had entered with the knights placed his foot on the neck of the holy priest and precious martyr, and, horrible to relate, scattered the brains and blood about the pavements, crying to the others, ‘Let us away, knights; this fellow will arise no more’.


No, this is not a passage from George R R Martin’s Game of Thrones. This is an eyewitness account of the murder of Saint Thomas Becket, which took place within the walls of the Cathedral.

Becket’s murder was the climax of a violent conflict between the rising power of the Roman church and the rising power of the English crown, a conflict which had been brewing over several centuries with the coming of Christianity to England. Already Chancellor to King Henry II, Becket was made Archbishop in order to solve the King’s problem; to combine the church and the state.

Yet Becket’s allegiance lay not with his King, but with God. King Henry raged in a fury, and four of his knights interpreted this as a command to avenge their King’s honour. So on the eve of 29th December 1170, they rode to Canterbury and murdered Becket in his Cathedral.

Despite his death, Becket’s impact on the Cathedral was only just beginning and the Cathedral became a shrine to the martyr. Inside the Cathedral, the stained glass windows tell of the many stories of miracles that happened after Becket’s death. People were being cured of critical ailments – from paralysis to speech impediments.

The huge influx of pilgrims to Canterbury from all over Europe meant that Canterbury became a crowded hub of cosmopolitan life. With increased financial income from the pilgrims, it was now time to build a place worthy of Becket. Yet this project was short-lived. Another horror was to befall the Cathedral.
In 1174, a fire broke out. The flames spread and engulfed the Cathedral, destroying years of building and extension following Becket’s death. The only part of the Cathedral which lay untouched by the flames was the Crypt; which housed the Cathedral’s most holy relic, the body of St Thomas. Yet one man saw this disaster as an opportunity. A French mason, William of Sens, was appointed to rebuild the Cathedral. William employed several hundred workers and had ingenious new machines made to gather the stone from France.

He planned a magnificent structure which would introduce the Gothic style into Britain for the first time. The new buttresses meant the Cathedral walls could be higher, with more windows to let in more light. Within five years, a new Cathedral was rising from the ashes of the old. When finished in 1184, it was a revolutionary building. Previously, churches were dark places so to symbolise the mystery of God. This new Cathedral, however, with its high ceilings and many windows, emphasised a very different image of the almighty. It was the latest sensation, and the most important site of pilgrimage in Europe. William of Sens had turned a fiery disaster into a masterpiece of the masons’ art.

In the 16th century, however, the Cathedral was yet again at the centre of the crisis between church and crown; and this time it was a new King Henry. With the separation of Rome by Henry VIII mixed with the rise of Protestant attacks on the Catholic saints, the cult of Saint Thomas Becket was being slowly destroyed. Henry’s men ransacked the Cathedral. Becket’s body was dragged into the Cathedral grounds and burned.

Or was it? To this day it is unknown what really happened. Was it Becket’s body that was burned, or another put in its place by the monks protecting Becket? In 1888, a skeleton was found in the crypt, one of the same height and bearing the same injuries as Becket. The skeleton was never proved to be Becket, though many believe the conspiracy to be true.

Canterbury Cathedral has symbolised and represented many things – good and bad – over the course of its long history. It was the focus of several conflicts between the church and the crown; and a stage for the horrific acts that ensued. It was a theatre of pilgrimage dedicated to its martyr and a place of saintly miracles. It was an architectural sensation; a product of the finest masonry art of the 12th century.

Today the Cathedral has once again become a place of majesty; a monument to a golden age of Cathedrals, when the church was at the height of its wealth and power. It is also a place of celebration, at least to many Kent graduates, who have the privilege of graduating within its walls. So even now we are all still shaping the history of our Cathedral.

Emily Jane Roe
MA History of Science, Medicine, Environment and Technology
Special Sources in our midst

What is the connection between the work of the great political cartoonist Carl Giles, theatre memorabilia of the Edwardian era, recent TV productions of Restoration Man and Ian Hislop’s Stiff Upper Lip, Canterbury Deanery, rare William Blake volumes and a T S Eliot Collection?

The answer is our very own Special Collections in the Templeman Library. Staff and postgraduates in the School of English were treated to a canapés and wine evening last December 5th to view, touch and explore some of the wonders of the library’s rare book collection. History students had been invited on the evening before. The resources and available source materials were described and introduced by Steve Holland, whose enthusiasm for books was evident and drew me back to explore what the entire area has to offer.

The Special Collections archive includes a vast array of books and early manuscripts, an astonishing list of cartoons of which 150,000 have been digitised, as many cartoon drawings and a 19th century theatrical poster collection. Dr Nick Hiley recently showed me around some of the basement archives where much of the British Cartoon Archive is stored and explained some of the changes afoot.

The Special Collections currently house their vast archive material in a variety of places within the library and also work closely with Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library. Among the TV programmes mentioned above which have used these archives recently and filmed either in the Library or the Cathedral Deanery is a documentary on the Cold War, which was researched here in November 2012.

The staff get regular online enquires and work with researchers all over the world. Our modern and medieval historians on campus make good use of the material and English, Politics, Drama and Art students are drawn to it. There may be many still, however, who are not fully aware of what is available. The current collection also calls out to sociology students and those with an interest in the history of illustrative design.

So many original documents are stored within the library collection, many of which are still relatively unknown. One history student looking at the cartoons of Louis Raemaekers anticipated detailing 100 images only to discover three more separate cartoons tucked into the back of the book with a letter from the artist.

Within the library extension plans to be completed by spring 2015, the good news is that the entire library collection will be incorporated together in one large space on the second floor. This will include: an exhibition space, a reading room, work room and four store rooms which will give coherent meaning to this entire collection and make it much more accessible to students and staff. This new arrangement may also make it easier for students studying subject areas with interdisciplinary approaches to make better use of source materials.

Recent work in Special Collections has brought in student volunteers who have helped to log boxes of material on the university computer system and offer exhibitions of material they have dealt with. Collections are constantly being donated to the Cartoon Archive, as well as can be seen by the recent exhibition of material on Dr Syntax co-ordinated by Dr James Baker. These are on-going projects, and others will no doubt arise as the collections continue to expand.

An archive is more than a preserve of ‘old books’ and musty manuscripts. This one is preserving the passion of the artists, illustrators, historians, writers and talent for us to share.

Check out the regular blogs and updates on their website at www.kent.ac.uk/library/specialcollections

Pauline McGonagle
MA Postcolonial Studies

English Graduate Conference

Transactions

Thursday 16 May 2013
Was not writing poetry a secret transaction, a voice answering a voice? (Virginia Woolf, from Orlando)

How do we envisage literature’s importance in the world of today?

We welcome abstracts of no more than 250 words. For more information please visit: www.kent.ac.uk/english/postgraduate/graduateconference.html

Please send abstracts and brief biographies to the organisers by Thursday 28 March 2013:

Victoria Bennett vb95@kent.ac.uk
Claire Hurley ch495@kent.ac.uk
Pauline McGonagle pm308@kent.ac.uk

Postgraduate Research Festival

Tuesday 18 June 2013, Woolf College

A great opportunity for postgraduate students, both taught and research, to showcase their research work to fellow students and academics.

The day includes:
- Academic talks on career development, success in publishing and research grant applications
- Prize for best poster in each Faculty
- Drinks reception and presentation of poster awards

To register your poster please see: www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/news/pgresearchfestival.html

The Graduate School is running workshops on ‘Producing an Effective Research Poster’ on 29 May 2013 – book via the online system: https://bloom.kent.ac.uk