

## Postdoc Centre News Archive - 2014

### First OPdA Research Day @ the Postdoc Centre



Our first Research Day - *Highly Skilled Mobility and Gender Mechanisms* - took place on 29 April 2014 at the Postdoc Centre. After an introduction by Professor Chris Abell, a series of presentations analysed the gendered mechanisms of mobility, acknowledging its impact on career progression in the academic and research community.

Articles presented included:

- **Alina Toader** - Postdoc at the University of Neuchâtel, Laboratory of Transnational Studies *Transnational Mobility of Early Academics: Motivations, Practices, Effects*: Results of a survey conducted in 2013 across three universities (Cambridge, Zurich and UCLA). Alina has been participating to the research project *Transnational Mobility of Academics in the Early Stages of their Careers: Transforming or Reproducing Gender Regimes?*, directed by Prof. Janine Dahinden.
- **Geneviève Guétemme** - MCF Orléans and Paris 3 (THALIM) *Moving Partners*: A presentation on a gender divide that brings many women, several with young children, to abandon their career and become followers, going from place to place, postdoc to postdoc job or fellowship to fellowship. Geneviève is leading an art project on ricocheting mobility or how do partners and children move along the academic career progression.
- **Eglė Kačkutė**, Vilnius University, Gender Studies Centre, UNESCO Fellow *Portrait of a (Working) Mother*: A series of [case studies](#) looking at the complicated world of internationally mobile families. Increasingly, academic research requires extensive mobility so the requirements for families need to be redefined. This is a collaboration with photographer Marina Cavazza.

## Official launch of the Postdoc Centre



The Postdoc Centre, part of the University of Cambridge, is a key part of a long-term plan to create better facilities for the more than 3,500 postdoctoral researchers. It has been created by a new organisation within the University, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPdA). The OPdA's aim is to help postdoctoral researchers (postdocs) throughout their time at Cambridge, including before they arrive and after they have left.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz said: "The University and the Colleges recognise the enormous contribution postdoctoral researchers make through their research, which is central to the mission of the University, so it is our aim to make their time at Cambridge as productive and positive as possible. The new centre is one of many developments which we hope will provide, alongside volunteers, enhanced support for the postdoc community. Much of what we do now will be enhanced by the future opening of the North West Cambridge Development, which will provide accommodation, large dedicated space and local amenities for large numbers of postdocs and their families."

Postdocs come from all over the world - currently over 90 nationalities - and are responsible for much of the world-class research that underpins the University's high international standing. They represent the largest staff grouping in the University.

Professor Chris Abell, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, said: "Cambridge has a very large population of postdoctoral researchers - many more than most other institutions. Creating the Postdoc Centre is an important and overdue development. We are grateful for the enthusiasm shown for the mission of the OPdA by the University and Colleges. The support from Trinity College had been particularly welcome."

The driving force behind the Postdoc Centre is Karina Prasad, the Head of Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. She has planned the centre to be a place where postdocs can drop in to get advice about any aspect of their time in Cambridge. However her vision is bigger than that. She said: "I want this to be a place postdocs can use for networking and social events, as well as to come to as a source of support. Life as a postdoctoral member of staff can be difficult, especially when they first arrive at the university. Many have families, and for a significant number this has meant travelling a long way from where they consider home. Their needs will vary considerably. It is our ambition to provide the extra support and training required."

Two other organisations that play a key role in postdoc life, the PdOC Society and the Newcomers and Visiting Scholars (NVS), will also be located at the centre. The staff at the centre will include many volunteers, most of whom are partners of current postdocs. This team will run the centre five days a week. However, the facilities, which include seminar rooms, meeting rooms and a small library, will be freely available to the postdoc community seven days a week.

The launch event was held on 22 May 2014 with Professor Jeremy Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Affairs, cutting the ribbon. Professor Sanders, who played a leading role in setting up the OPdA, said: "I am delighted that postdoctoral researchers at the University now have a centre they can call their own. It is a significant landmark in the University's commitment to support its world-class research staff."

*Launch photos: Phil Mynott*

### **OPdA volunteer is appointed as Postdoc Centre's Office Manager**



Ms Debbie Nel has been appointed as Office Manager of the Postdoc Centre, effective from 20 October 2014. She joined the OPdA as volunteer in February 2014 and took on various administrative tasks, including looking after our finances! She was one of the volunteers who helped organise the launch of the Postdoc Centre back in May.

Debbie was Administrative Officer at the University of Cape Town for ten years before relocating to Cambridge in October 2013 to follow her partner who had been appointed as lecturer at the University of Cambridge.

She is one of our success stories, having secured a fixed-term post at the Centre where she has been volunteering her skills and expertise for several months. Professor Chris Abell, Mrs Karina Prasad, the staff and volunteer team offer Debbie their warmest congratulations.

## Focus on Social Enterprise & The Perfect Proposal



On 19 November, the OPdA team, Cambridge Connect members and other interested parties attended an event in the newly refurbished Seminar Room to find out more about Social Enterprise in Cambridge. Speakers included **Martin Clark** and **Belinda Bell** from **Future Business Centre**, **Laura Allen** from **Humanitarian Centre**, **Anna Malan** from **Cambridge Hub** and **Mike Clarke** from **Business in the Community**. It was a really inspiring morning for all participants.



On 24 November, postdocs were invited to find out more about Cambridge University Press, the University's own publisher and hear first-hand how the world of publishing has changed in the past ten years. Phil Meyler, Publishing Development Director, gave participants an overview of Cambridge University Press, including top tips on getting a book or journal article published.