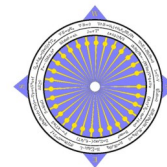


The Pendulum— Spring 24

Issue 21



As I write academic colleagues are marking exam papers, teams in the department are collating marks, and preparing data and paperwork for our examination boards. The final year external examiners for our undergraduate programmes from the universities of Manchester and Sussex, and Queen's University Belfast visited last week to talk with our MPhys students who were presenting posters on their final year project work. Once the examination boards are complete our attention will turn to graduation, which this year is on the 25th July for our students.



On Saturday 15th June many colleagues and students were in the department for a University of Warwick Open Day. These are important events; it was a very busy day with large numbers of visitors in the department. The open day experience makes a real difference to student choices. No one can know, in advance, what their university experience will be like. But the combination of talking to staff about our courses, interacting with our current students and the open day activities gives prospective students a real insight into what their University experience at Warwick might be like. That is why open days are so important and why I am immensely grateful to all the staff and students who give of their time to make them such a success. We have three more open days this year, so I hope we have many more volunteers!

Mental Health Awareness Week (13-19 May) is a national activity to raise awareness of mental health. This year's theme was 'Movement: moving more for our mental health' and Physics marked the week with lunchtime walks around campus.

Over the Easter vacation colleagues in physics (Beth Sharp, Joe Cregeen, Martha Turvey, Luke Smith, Lauren Doyle, Ally Caldecote, Alan Burton and David Hudson) organised and delivered an outreach event (23 students, plus teachers) with Exhall Grange special educational needs school. The theme of the day was "ultrasound" and interactive session included finding hidden voids in an aluminium block, playing with a Chladni plate (a technique to show the various modes of vibration on a rigid surface), and a demonstration of a tornado in a box (with water mist generated ultrasonically to visualise the vortex). The aim of the visit was mostly as a fun day out, but with the teachers help the team managed to link in a lot of topics they had been learning about in their science classes. Suggestions for outreach events are always greatly received!

The [STEM Connect](#) (formerly known as Grand Challenge) project focusing on the development of our new Science and Engineering Precinct is now awaiting the outcome of the hybrid planning application. Enabling works are scheduled to start this summer. A Workplace Survey has been launched for all staff and PGRs in Chemistry, Engineering, Physics and Research Technology Platforms (RTPs) to gather vital feedback. The Survey is now live until 5 July 2024.

Of course not all students disappear over the summer; I hope that all the undergraduates engaged in URSS projects enjoy their experience of research and that our postgraduates have a productive period of activity and/or conference travels. Academics can focus on writing their next grant application and papers, while the professional services teams pull everything together and start to prepare for the next academic year.

I wish you all a good summer, including some time for a well-earned holiday. All contributions to the newsletter are welcome! To help us all stay connected please share any items of interest to physicsadmin@warwick.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Grants



Professor Don Pollacco has been awarded £3 million by the European Research Council (ERC) as part of the EU's Horizon Europe Programme in partnership with the University of Warwick. The project will develop a 'digital telescope' that will be capable of producing a highly sensitive continuous movie of the night sky. Don is one of 225 outstanding research leaders in Europe who received ERC Advanced Grants. Find out more about the [project](#) and [Don's research](#).

Awards

Professor Chapman was presented her award at the annual European Geosciences Union (EGU) meeting in Vienna with over 15,000 people in attendance. Sandra also gave a lecture titled 'Multiscale matters: when coupling across multiple scales drives the dynamics of solar system plasmas.'

[Find out more about what it means to Sandra to receive the medal.](#)



Student Awards

Congratulations to Martha Turvey (PhD student in the Ultrasound group) who won the [best oral presentation prize at the British Liquid Crystal Society conference](#).

Congratulations to students who have been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in Physics:

Folusho Balogun	Jake Hutchinson	Sam Maloney	James Nunn
Bhagyashree Pagare	Dominic Sterland	Ben Williams	Ben Wood

Congratulations to students who have been awarded a Master of Science (by Research) in Physics:

Susumu Matsumoto	Toby Rodel
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Gerhard Ertl Young Investigator Award

Lukas Hoermann was recently been selected as one of five finalists for the Gerhard Ertl Young Investigator Award by the German Physical Society. This allowed him to present his research to a large crowd of more than a hundred international scientists at this year's spring meeting of the Condensed Matter Section of the German Physical Society.

His research focuses on the simulation of dynamic friction at the atomic scale, where he studies how the chemical composition and interaction at the interface affect the dissipation of mechanical energy. This requires accounting for fundamentally quantum mechanical effects such as electronic and phononic friction.

Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Starters and Leavers (31 January—31 April)

The department welcomes...

Georgia Edwards Louise Foster
Menai Lamers-James Mark Hollands
Robin Sjøkvist Elizabeth Thorne
Pearse Towers Sophie Wawman

We say thank you and good luck to...

Aiman Khan
Dipanjan Mandal
Elizabeth Sharp

Staff Profiles

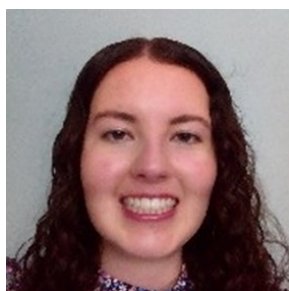


Lizzie Thorne, Administrative Assistant

My role involves: Supporting Physics Admin and helping to organise conferences. Expenses, Opera, and credit card orders as well as the departmental notice boards and supporting other areas of the team.

Career history: Originally, I am from down south in Salisbury where I was a fully qualified hairdresser; I did this for 7 years before moving to study in France for 8 months (Although my French is still very poor, I'm afraid to say!). Returning to the UK about a year ago, I moved up to Coventry with my sister and brother-in-law and worked at the Sports and Wellness Hub on campus before deciding to join the Physics Team!

When not at work, you can find me: either out cycling, in the gym or spending time with my family.



Georgia Edwards, Senior HR Assistant

My role involves: Providing guidance on HR matters and management of HR processes including recruitments, contract extensions, redeployment, visitors, right to work checks, and delivering administrative support to the head of department.

Career history: I previously worked as an Administrative Assistant in the Department of Chemistry covering parental leave for 5 months prior to my role in Physics.

When not at work, you can find me: At home reading a book or spending time with my many pets.

Upcoming Dates

Anyone can add an event to the Physics [calendar](#). If you have availability to help at one of the upcoming open days, [please let us know your availability](#).

Saturday 22 June—Open Day

Tuesday 2 July—[Women in Physics catch up](#)

Wednesday 3 July—Physics BBQ (More details to follow)

Thursday 25 July—[Talk by Professor Stephane Udry](#)

Thursday 25 July—Physics Graduation

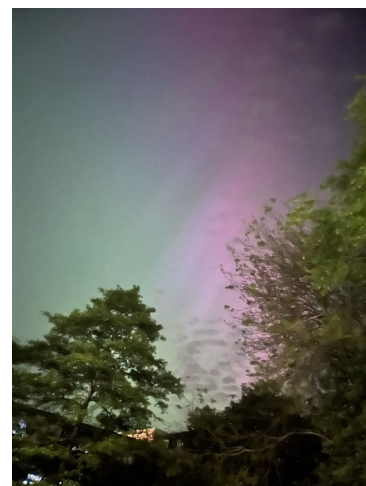
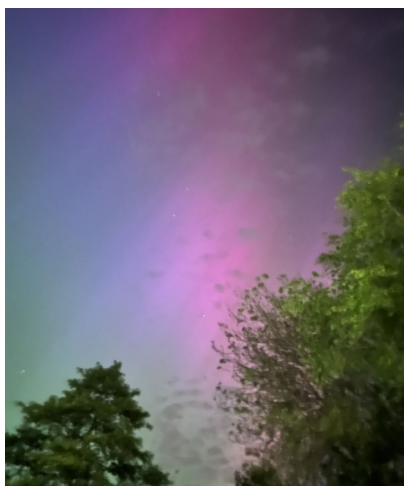
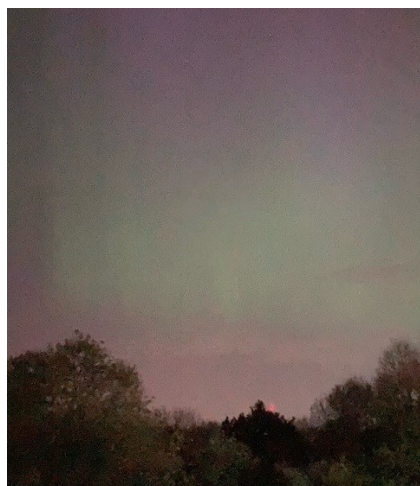
Thursday 1 August—[Women in Physics catch up](#)



Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Aurora Borealis in the UK

Over the weekend, multiple coronal mass ejections (CMEs) erupted from a large active region on the solar disk and combined in front of the Earth to drive the first G5 geomagnetic storm since 2003. This led to stunning aurorae over much of England as captured by several PhD students from Physics". These students will be working over the coming days to understand this event in more detail as well as the space weather impacts - so far which are understood to include aeroplanes being rerouted from over the poles due to lack of communications and loss of service from Starlink satellites due to the increased drag affecting their orbits. *(Pictures below captured by PhD students Yihui Tong and Baran Ökten)*



Trip to see the total eclipse

Here what Dr Ravindra Desai says about his recent trip to Dallas to see the total eclipse in April.

The weather was cloudy all day which led to a tense atmosphere as it was unclear whether we would be able to actually view the eclipse. But we were lucky and the clouds parted at the right moment. We were in Dallas at the Triennial Earth Sun Summit (TESS) conference which featured many talks on solar activity and space weather. Many of the scientists had arrived with their own telescopes to record the event. As the eclipse started we managed to see the phenomenon of Bailey's beads in fine detail - when the moon nearly completely covers the sun and sunlight shines through the valleys in the moon's surface, appearing as a series of bright beads. Then came totality, and darkness. We took our eclipse glasses off at this point and could see the magnetic structure of the solar corona. Remarkably, we saw a bright filament erupting from the southern limb of the sun which appeared pink to the naked eye due to Lyman-alpha emission. 2024 is near solar maximum and we saw streamers emerging from all around the solar disk. Jupiter and Venus were visible to the left and right of the Sun, respectively, and long exposure shots on mobile phones and cameras captured a nearby comet. Totality ended after several awe-inspiring minutes.



Share your news and research

Continue to share your news stories, updates and successes by emailing physicsadmin@warwick.ac.uk.

Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Dr James Blake speaks at Space Situational Awareness Conference



Dr James Blake was invited to speak on behalf of the Department's Centre for Space Domain Awareness at the 19th Space Situational Awareness Conference in London. The conference brings together experts from defence, industry and academia to discuss the future landscape for space surveillance and traffic management in light of emerging threats in space and across the globe.

James presented his recent work on surveying for debris in high-altitude orbits and simulating sensor network architectures for cost-effective space surveillance, before taking part in panel discussions on enabling the continued use of space through sustainability efforts.

James says: "This was a great opportunity to get a feel for how plans for the new National Space Operations Centre are shaping up. It's historically been difficult for academia to engage with end users in government and industry, so it's important that academic voices feed into these discussions to make that process easier in the future."

New funding for Inclusive Education activities

Physics has successfully bid for money to support inclusive education activity.

This includes £8000 for pre-existing activity (e.g. student lunches, Equitea events, the IOP CuWIP+ conference and for celebrating International Day of Women and Girls in Science) and £5000 for new projects.

This year, we will be working on two new projects, both involving co-creation with students. The first aims to map the neurodiverse undergraduate student journey to identify how we might better support them in how we plan and deliver activity. The second, 'Picture a Physicist', will seek to create a resource of peer-to-peer advice from a variety of student perspectives and identities and celebrate the diversity within the department. This will hopefully be launched to coincide with the start of the next academic year.

Both of these projects will be given an airing at the Open Days on the EDI stand as prospective students may also have valuable things to contribute.

If you would like to get involved in either project, please talk to Chris Taylor in the student office or drop him an email: chris.taylor.2@warwick.ac.uk.

Mapping the UG Physics journey from a neurodiverse perspective.



The Student Office is undertaking a new project to better understand the experience of neurodiverse students on our UG Physics and combined degrees.

Keep an eye out for additional communications and calls for involvement. If you would like to know more please contact physicsug@warwick.ac.uk

Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Training opportunities

The Department encourages all staff members to take up to five days of training and development each year. There are a range of training opportunities available such as:

[Inclusion Learning](#)—Creating a culture of inclusion, where diversity is recognised, understood and valued. We strongly recommend that you register for the Microaggressions email course.

[Leadership and Management training](#)—Helping leaders and managers access the best development options for their career

[Training for research active staff](#)—Training available for research staff

[IT training](#)— Links to various courses

[Mind Tools](#)—A platform that offers over 2700 resources including videos, audio, animations and more.

Please ensure you speak to your line manager for approval before registering to attend any training.

Wellbeing Support

One in four adults experience a mental health condition at some point in their lives.

- At Warwick, staff members can join the [Warwick Wellbeing Peer Support Group](#) which aims to create a safe and confidential space for members of staff who would like support with their wellbeing. The group is facilitated by professionally trained Lead Peer Support Staff and members can share lived experiences and knowledge in a safe and respectful environment.
- The [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) is a confidential support service designed to support staff (including GTA staff) with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health and general wellbeing. This is available for you as well as immediate family members and offers services including life support, legal information, bereavement support, medical information and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).
- [Wisdom APP](#) provides confidential support with the option to contact via live chat, video call, helpline of request contact and offers tools such as weekly mood tracker, four week plans, mini health checks and breathing techniques.

[Find out what other support is available.](#)

The [Wellbeing team](#) offer [support to undergraduate and postgraduate students](#). Postgraduate students can also access support through the [Doctoral College](#).

Working with the press to promote your research

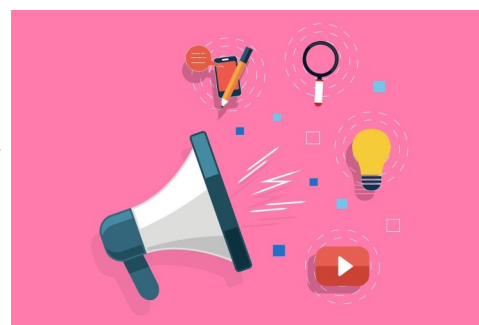
Greetings from the press team! Many of you have worked with me before, I'm Annie Slinn, the press officer from the central University, leading on science stories across all departments.

If you have an exciting research announcement, publication, grant or anything that might be of interest to the national press and general public, please get in touch with me – annie.slinn@warwick.ac.uk.

If you're not sure if something's a story or not, please let me know and I can take a look for you and advise.

I can also help get your expert comments in news stories in the media and help organise media training if you want to improve your broadcast interview skills.

If you have any further questions, or want to learn more, please just drop me an email!



Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Family friendly policies

From April 2024, the University [family friendly policies](#) have been updated with new statutory changes, some of which are highlighted below:

- **Flexible working**—e.g. reduced hours, compressed hours. All employees can request this from their first day of employment.
- **Paternity leave**—for fathers and partners, 2 weeks at statutory pay, with a window to take leave now 1 year after child's birth/placement
- **Carer's leave**— very specific eligibility, 5 days paid leave now from their first day of employment (statutory requirement is 5 days unpaid)
- **Protection from redundancy for 18 months on return from maternity, shared parental and adoption leave**—This does not change the end date of a fixed term contract but gives the right to be offered suitable alternative employment in preference to other employees even if they are also at risk.

Contact the HR team at physicshr@warwick.ac.uk for further information.

Changes to Financial Procedures

- The total value of UK/European travel that can be booked outside of Key Travel has increased from £500 to £1,000. Note that [Key Travel remains the preferred method of booking](#). Remember to complete the [Notice of Overseas Travel](#) form before travelling.
- Business entertainment limits have been increased from £55 to £60 per head; the staff to visitor ratio remains at 4 staff: 1 visitor. Business entertainment requires the approval of HoD or delegated authority.

For UKRI awards only:

- Alcohol cannot be charged to any UKRI grants or studentship. However since University financial regulations still allow a moderate amount of alcohol (i.e. 2 drinks) with a meal, when completing an expenses claim charge the meal and any non-alcoholic drinks to the project code and charge alcoholic drinks to the group discretionary code. Note that a 'conference dinner' including wine can be charged to the project as it is the same price with/without alcohol.

Contact the Finance team at physicsadmin@warwick.ac.uk with any queries.

Reminder about submitting expense claims via Concur

Please be reminded of the below points when you are submitting your expense claims, to ensure they are accurate.

1. Claims must be submitted for reimbursement within three months of the expense being incurred. Failure to do so without a valid reason may result in payment being delayed or withheld. (FP16.2.1)
2. All receipts must be itemised. Credit card stubs without itemised receipts will not be accepted.
3. If an alert shows when you're submitting your claim, please re-check the details (for example, to ensure the city of purchase matches the city of the currency paid). If for any reason, you can't amend the line, please make sure you provide a comment for justification.

Contact the Finance team at physicsadmin@warwick.ac.uk with any queries.

Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

LabCup update

Sent on behalf of Ella Watson (Business Change Manager, IDG)

We have made excellent progress with migrating all Groups data to LabCup and intend to finish the implementation in Physics by the end of June. There will be a final meeting held online to share key information about changes to policies and guidance, including how to incorporate LabCup into the order process for new chemicals.

It is a requirement that ALL existing chemicals be labelled. Over the next couple of months, work will be required by all Groups to attach a barcode label to their chemical items. Stephanie Brown and Robb Johnstone are supporting this work by providing the labels for existing items. Please support their efforts by placing the barcodes on the items as soon as you receive these.



New University branding

The University has recently refreshed its branding including departmental logos and provides a page of resources for you to use such as poster templates, presentation templates, thesis cover templates and our [departmental letterhead](#) on the A-Z pages. Please do take a look and ensure use aligns with the [University branding](#).



Admin team away day

On Thursday 21 March, the admin team visited St Francis employability in Radford, Coventry to support their social supermarket, food bank and community café. They were put in touch with the charity through Warwick Volunteers.

The charity work with Coventry Council to support the local community with a variety of schemes with the aim of encouraging people into employment.

Thank you to Ria Wilson in particular for organising, And thanks to everyone in the department who donated items to the food bank, the team at St Francis were extremely grateful for all of the items received.

Find out more about [Warwick Volunteers](#).



Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!

Scientific Computing Drop-in sessions

The SC RTP drop in is open to anyone with scientific computing problems, it's a weekly event to support, engage, and inform all Warwick researchers from PGR students to academic staff in all things research computing. [Find out more and the drop-in dates.](#)

Changes to printing services

The in-house printing service known as Warwick Print will be closing at the end of July. Friday 28th June is the last date for placing orders, please be patient as turnaround times are likely to be longer than normal. After this date, Warwick Print will not be available.

For the most common printing needs you will be able to use the upgraded Kyocera multi-functional printer/copiers. Larger or more specialised print projects such as promotional items or bound publications will be handled through the University's approved print suppliers. Many offer advanced capabilities beyond Warwick Print's services as well as environmentally sustainable printing options.

For the rest of this academic year, the [Warwick Print](#) website will provide full details on which vendor to use for your specific printing need, along with [instructions](#) on how to place orders. After that, visit the Procurement web pages and click 'Approved Suppliers'; and for brand guidance, visit the Brand web pages. Anything that previously went through Warwick Print's in-house services will need to be requested through these new channels from Friday 28th June. The student printer credit system will remain unchanged.

Pets As Therapy Dogs

On the 28th February, the [Pets As Therapy Dogs](#) visited the department for a staff and postgraduate student session. The charity aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of communities, and gave people the opportunity to drop in to the common room to see the pets.

These sessions are also run for our undergraduate students via the Physics Society.



Work Experience Placements

This year we received more applications to take part in our work experience placement, than we have ever received. Thank you to everyone who took time out of their day to support the placement either by running a session or having lunch with the students. The group had a varied schedule where they had the opportunity to meet different academics and learn about research groups within the department.



Do you have a story that could be included in the next newsletter? Click [here](#) to let us know!