

**August 2012**

**Issue 30**

This is the issue where I was hoping to say what a wonderful summer we have had. Sadly the weather has been very disappointing. Thankfully we have had the Olympic Games to watch when we cannot get out and about. This event has brought the nation together. Coventry and Midlands have had their share of publicity. The University of Warwick has also played its part.

Many of the members are well aware of the various activities of the University of Warwick Retired Staff Association (WRSA for short) but for those less familiar the following gives a brief outline. The Committee and members of the RSA arrange a number of events throughout the year allowing members to meet with friends and keep in touch with the University. The best attended events are the lunches arranged in the Spring, Autumn and Christmas. There is usually a guest speaker at the Spring and Autumn lunches and this allows the members to keep in touch at first hand with the work being carried out at the University.

To enable more variety in the activities and have more of the members actively involved there is a Questionnaire included with this newsletter. The Committee members are very pleased that many of the members are active in attending events but fewer than 20 members have an active role in organising events. Please will you complete the Questionnaire so that this can change and hopefully introduce new activities.

The walks currently arranged by a small group of enthusiasts led by Malcolm Wilding are a popular activity. Malcolm has to reduce his role and would like to encourage some of the newer members to get involved. Both as a cost saving activity and to speed up communication Malcolm has produced a Proforma to gather a list of email addresses for potential walkers. Please see the note from Malcolm on page 8 of this Newsletter.

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## Dates for your diary

AGM and lunch with talk by a WRSA Bursary winner David Coates, September 25<sup>th</sup> 2012

Visit to Chatsworth House dressed for Christmas, November 29<sup>th</sup> 2012

Visits to Windsor and Chatham Docks Spring 2013 (Dates to be announced later)

## **Spring Lunch and talk, April 27<sup>th</sup> 2012**

The Spring lunch held at the Sports Centre was another very successful event. Ninety members attended the lunch and were enthralled by a very interesting and amusing talk given by Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya.

Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya, Chairman Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) informed and entertained the members of the RSA after being welcomed by Dr Steve Van Toller, the RSA Chairman, and introduced by Colin Brummit.

Lord Bhattacharyya said what a pleasure it was to catch up with so many people who helped make Warwick University what it is today. Because of the shared contribution to Warwick, he was going to concentrate on the W of WMG - the 'Warwick'. What had enabled WMG to flourish in the way it has was the space, literal and metaphorical, that Warwick University gave to it. He emphasised literal, because with four buildings already in use, a fifth being built and a sixth in the planning phase, physical space matters to a growing organisation! For WMG, being a Warwick institution defines not just their relationship with the University, but their relationship with the community, people and businesses of the county and the region. WMG would never have succeeded without the businesses and workforce of the region. It was their willingness to become partners, allies and colleagues in research and education that made the growth possible

Lord Bhattacharyya founded WMG thirty-two years ago and from day one, the campus and its people were key to what was done. He expressed his great fortune in having a Vice-Chancellor, Jack Butterworth, who was both a leader and someone who encouraged others to lead. He was sure that many of those present had their own experiences of Jack's leadership and vision. What he was going to relate was his particular experience.

Thirty years ago, 'impact' was a bit of a dirty word, even in engineering, "You weren't quite kosher if you weren't a 'pure scientist' ". When he came to Warwick to propose a department focused on research essential to the success of the West Midlands manufacturing industries, Jack Butterworth didn't turn his nose up, instead, he gave him an office, and let him get on with it. However important Jack Butterworth was to WMG, he was far from alone in helping them succeed. From his first member of staff onwards, the Warwick community was essential to the growth.

Back in the Eighties, Warwick was the only university group in Britain with the purpose of re-invigorating manufacturing through innovation. Like now times were tough for local businesses. It was hard to persuade businesses facing hard times to invest for the future, but he knew that the answers businesses sought required innovative technologies and skilled people. Their idea was that academia could support working engineers facing real world challenges. First, by developing engineering courses and qualifications that fitted around people's actual working lives; not just part-time study, but study that was integrated with the problems and challenges engineers faced at work every day. Second, Warwick could help local businesses develop research breakthroughs to practical engineering challenges. That innovation could then give them a crucial edge over the competition.

Over the last thirty years, those two principles have been at the heart of everything that has been done at WMG. To give people in business an appropriate education or outstanding innovation, you have to show them exactly how you can help. That means understanding their problems, their pressures, their business. It means knowing what their workers can do now, and what they need to be able to do next year. It means understanding that for a business with a thousand pound budget, a million pound solution is worse than useless.

So WMG make it their business to really know local business. What was wonderful was that as people developed and grew with the support of WMG, they founded their own businesses, or became leaders in other fields. They took their trust in WMG with them. This developed a web of connections with business, institutions and people in the region and far beyond. As WMG developed and grew, it attracted people and investment to the community. By the nineties WMG went international and they have centres in and students from, India, China, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore and Thailand.

Lord Bhattacharyya cited the example of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) who moved their 170 person advanced research group to WMG and committed to invest over one hundred million pounds in research. Ralf Speth, the Chief Executive of JLR, has called WMG the 'hub' of JLR's Research efforts. The Daily Telegraph called the JLR Advanced Research Group at WMG Jaguar's 'Dream Factory'. When you see the concepts and ideas being researched there, and the innovative way engineering is being done – using tools like 3-D virtual reality, rapid prototyping and 3-D printing, it's hard not to get excited by the ambition and enthusiasm of such research.

To be able to stand in front of a virtual 3D car, and pull it apart, change its design, put it back together again and see how your changes look, and how they perform, that's exciting. It's wonderful to have the latest kit at Warwick, and exciting for researchers designing the next generation of batteries for low carbon cars, or the configuration of a heads up display that means you don't have to take your eyes off the road to check your speed.

It's inspiring for researchers and students to be part of developing innovative solutions to the engineering challenges of the toughest environments, the tightest budgets or the most discerning of customers. Engineering is all about practical results to tricky problems

Lord Bhattacharyya said he did not want that sense of excitement to be limited to the elite of the global Engineering and Design community, he wanted it for everyone and wanted it to happen at Warwick. As well as a Dream Factory for leading engineers, we need a dream academy for our children. That is why he is a strong supporter of the proposal for a Warwick University Technical College, which will work with local engineering, businesses from JLR to small firms with a vision. Some of the best companies and supply chains are in this region, and they all desperately need new talent and skills to help them grow. That is why the Warwick University Technical College is so important. There is a need for engineering to reach a younger generation, and excite them about the opportunities in engineering and the creation of the high value products of tomorrow. He urged the RSA members to support the proposal for the creation of the University Technical College.

The dream factory and academy are two examples that show the range of WMG's presence and contribution to the community.

Lord Bhattacharyya began his career as an Engineering Apprentice at Lucas for nothing (he said) so he likes to think of WMG as the very opposite of an Ivory Tower because everyone is willing to get their hands dirty. The labs carry out research with a galaxy of local companies who see the critical value of innovation to their future growth. One example is goHDR, who are developing technology to view the wide range of real-world light on a screen. This might sound technical, but if you've ever watched football, you'll know why this matters. When you're at the ground, your eyes adjust to light and shadows and see a ball if it's in the shade or in bright sunlight. But if you watch the same game on TV, the ball can disappear into the shadows. goHDR's technology gives cameras the ability to clearly see a football when it is kicked, e.g. from the shadow of the stadium into bright sunshine.

Another local company benefiting from WMG's expertise is Envisage, who are designing the next generation of Airline seats. Because WMG have Britain's most advanced 3-D display and a partnership with an advanced design software company, they are able to develop a virtual prototype and to show how the seat design could work in the world's latest aircraft.

Fabrication Techniques Racing and their partners Stable Solution Ltd, who are based in Wellesbourne, used WMG's research facilities to laser scan a prototype engine for their racing bike. This technology helped the bike be ready in time to finish in second place in the first ever Moto2 race.

WMG works with the local NHS to improve the way doctors are informed, in a user friendly way, about exactly when and what to prescribe to patients in a busy hospital. This has radically reduced the number of prescription errors.

The SME cloud contracting system, designed at WMG helps local small businesses secure millions of pounds of business that they might have never had the chance to bid for.

The need for further buildings is a reflection of the success of WMG in becoming one of the first Catapult centres of excellence in the High Value Manufacturing sector. This is a new Government initiative to support innovation; the centres bridge the gap between business, academia, research and Government and are funded jointly by the Technology Strategy Board, Industry and Research Councils. WMG will receive £15 million per year over the next 5 years.

In conclusion, Lord Bhattacharyya thanked the RSA for inviting him and reiterated his thanks to the University of Warwick and in particular staff past and present without whom the success of WMG would not have been possible.

**Summary by Liz Prichard**

## **Walking group news and walk reports**

### **Thank you letter from the widow of a founder member of the walking group**

*Dear Walkers,*

*I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for your cards, tributes and the good wishes sent to me and the family during Dick's illness and subsequent passing.*

*He felt privileged to be involved with WRSA. He so enjoyed organising walks, the company of ex colleagues and putting the world to rights as you tramped the countryside*

*He would have been astounded at the number of tributes paid to him.*

*With thanks and sadness*

*Maggie Hosking*

## Report of the walks that took place from January to June 2012

### Report on Walk from Keresley Monday 16th January 2012

It was a beautiful sunny winter's morning when twenty seven walkers met in the car park of The White Lion at Allesley to begin the first walk of 2012. Due to unforeseen circumstances the starting point had to be changed just a few days before the walk, but after a flurry of e-mails around the members we all managed to arrive at the new venue on time, well done everyone. The walk started along Hawkes Mill Lane entering the farm field through a small plantation of conifer trees leading to the farm cottage. The fields looked very photogenic with the frost lying on the fields which resembled a light fall of snow and the sun making it shimmer in the distance. With the frosty conditions of the past couple of days, the previous heavy muddy conditions changed considerably making the walking firmer under foot. Half way into the walk I decided that maybe we should take a look at a couple of fields not scheduled on the walk but after finding the correct way marker, much to my relief, we were back on track. Keeping Muzzards Wood to the right we walked over the hill, where it was lovely to see the horses in their paddocks waiting to greet us and give them a pat on the nose. The fields to the left of Fivefield Lane off the Tamworth Road were used during the Coventry blitz as temporary tented accommodation for evacuees, which it is good to see has still been left as our beautiful countryside. The conversation turned to when one walker remembers being out all day walking these fields with a bottle of pop and a sandwich and realising he has never been back since, it was great to bring back happy memories. After walking the rural valley of Hall Brook we passed alongside the Old Keresley Hospital which is now the Royal Court Hotel and Leisure Centre. We finished the walk by walking through Coundon Park and Woods finally making our way back to the White Lion for lunch. Thirty two members joined us for lunch and after sorting out the discount vouchers with the manager Adi, a good social time was had by all. Well done the staff of The White Lion for producing so many lunches. It was nice to see Malcolm out walking again.



*June Clarke*

### Report on Leamington Pavement Walk 15 February 2012

This was a 'pavement' walk starting at Newbold Comyn Park which provided plenty of free parking, loo's and views over southern Leamington. Because of the large number of walkers (38) and narrow pavements we decided to split into 2 groups with Frances' group walking clockwise and Molly's group counter clockwise around the trail which took in the Jephson Gardens, the Old Town and The Landsdown area in North Leamington.

The aim was to share some historical insights into the early development from the small village of Leamington Priors in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century into the fashionable resort of Royal Leamington Spa by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following success in locating mineral springs, commercial development was fostered by several people, Satchwell, the first postmaster and entrepreneur, landowners such as Abbott and the Willes family, the architect William



Thomas and physicians Jephson, Hitchman and many more. Most of this early development was south of the river Leam but it was Wise and Greatheed, landowners on the north side of the river who built the Pump Rooms and encouraged development on their land.

We also visited the sites where eminent locals e.g. Frank Whittle had lived and where visitors e.g. Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Ruskin had stayed. Other sites visited included the first Post office, the original Town Hall and the twentieth century memorial to Czech patriots in the Jephson Gardens.

Fortunately, the weather was good and our timing too – both groups arriving at the Newbold Comyn Arms within 5 minutes of each other to indulge in a pleasant lunch and complete a very enjoyable day.

We are both sorry that a number of people did not get places on this walk which was heavily oversubscribed.

*Frances Halstead and Molly Pickles.*

### **Report on Walk round Haseley 20 March 2012**

This 4 mile walk around Haseley, which took place on a very pleasant spring day, was a mixture of fields and quiet lanes with just one short section alongside a busy main road. Plenty of livestock were on display, ewes with their lambs, cows with calves and a litter of piglets which insisted on being fed by several members of the walking party. We also saw the parish church of St Mary (unfortunately but understandably locked-up) and a Severn Trent water gathering ground, doubtless struggling to gather much water given the recent dry weather. We completely failed



to notice the advertised ancient animal pound where stray animals were collected and returned upon payment of a fine to the local lord of the manor. The walk started and finished at the Falcon Inn, Hatton where the usual refreshments were eagerly taken upon our return.

*Malcolm Cooper and Dennis Jones*

### **Report on Walk from Meriden 4 April 2012**

This walk took place in just about the worst possible conditions imaginable, freezing temperatures, horizontal snow and sleet and a howling gale. Caroline and I had already researched the walk in pretty awful weather – steady rain - and were looking forward to enjoying what is very attractive scenery in bright sunshine. As it was we harboured secret hopes about no one showing up at the start, The Bulls Head in Meriden, or, if anyone appeared that they would hurriedly agree to abandon the walk. As it was we reckoned without the steely determination of our group members. Some twenty walkers showed up and there was not a mention of not proceeding. We struggled round the four and a half miles of the route and in a perverse way really enjoyed the chilling experience. It made the warm welcome back in the Black Bull and the very good food all the more welcome. Perhaps one day we can try Meriden again in the good conditions the walk deserves. But the day was an impressive demonstration of the stern stuff our generation is made of!

*Godfrey Carr*

### **Report on Walk from Norton Lindsey 10 May 2012**

Twenty one enthusiastic – mostly – people set out from the New Inn at Norton Lindsey on a grey, windy, cold morning with what appeared to be rain clouds overhead! Those wearing wellies looked most appropriately dressed but all were prepared for the worst! However, we soon warmed up, the rain didn't come and we had an enjoyable six mile walk through fields, woodland and country lanes with considerable wetness and mud in places. Bluebells were at their peak in wooded areas and other wild flowers were beginning to show themselves. Sadly, Ginger, Sausage and Lardybum - the three enormous and friendly pigs introduced to us by the farmer when we



checked out the walk a few weeks earlier - were no longer in their enclosure, presumably having met their inevitable piggy fate. We arrived back in the village pausing for a photograph at the Queen Victoria Jubilee Monument and then settled down for a welcome drink and a very nice lunch at the New Inn.

*Fred and Barbara Troup*

## Report on Walk from Wellesbourne 21 June 2012

Fifteen members gathered in the car park of the Kings Head in Wellesbourne, and after ordering our lunchtime meals, set off on a round trip of just under five miles. Thankfully, it wasn't actually raining on the day of the walk, but it had done so for a number of days



beforehand, so the first field we had to cross presented us with a bit of a challenge, with oil seed rape plants collapsed and drooping across the path. Fortunately, the path improved after that, and we were soon descending from the top of the hill we had reached on an unclassified county road (actually a track) which led us down to the Horticultural

Research International (HRI) campus, now owned by the University of Warwick.

We stopped here for a photograph; some members were pleased to renew their acquaintance with the campus, and others to see the place for the first time. A number of projects continue to run here, in closely controlled environments, although most of the academic staff now spend most of their time on the Gibbet Hill Campus.

We continued along the unclassified road (now surfaced) through the middle of the HRI campus, and then followed a footpath through fields to the edge of Charlecote Park. As we walked along the road around the Park, we caught several glimpses of deer grazing.

Beyond Charlecote Park, we took a footpath along the bank of the River Dene back to Wellesbourne – it brought us out at the Kings Head, where we were joined by a few more members for lunch.

A good morning's walk was had by all, and my thanks for the original plan for the walk go to Malcolm Wilding, who took me on a pre-walk a couple of weeks beforehand.

*Bob Cooke*

## Note to walkers from Malcolm Wilding

As mailing costs have increased, it is proposed to send out notifications of walks by email, as most members now have this available to them. Those without email can be mailed conventionally by post if necessary.

Garden visits, pavement walks and similar visits where the walk distance is relatively short and for which footwear requirements are less specific will be distributed to all members with full mailings, such as with CommUlicate.

Those who wish to join the walking group, and who are able to cope with the conventional four to six mile walks over fields, mud, stiles and other obstacles should complete the form enclosed with this mailing, INCLUDING those without email facilities. Other temporarily (or permanently) retired walkers, or other members, who wish to join the group for lunch only should also complete the form.

If possible, those without email should try to arrange for a neighbouring member to let them know about walks, and from whom they could obtain a printed copy of the description.

## Visit Report

### Report of visit to Portsmouth, May 9<sup>th</sup> 2012

With an unsettled weather forecast ahead of us we left the Memorial Park in good spirits and looking forward to our visit to Portsmouth Waterfront.

On arrival, much to the delight of some of our members, we disembarked in front of an M & S shopping outlet. A number of us headed to the Spinnaker Tower to enjoy a welcome cup of coffee. The tower soaring 170 metres high offered fantastic viewing, from three decks through floor-to-ceiling glass windows, stretching up to 23 miles although weather conditions at the time limited this.

With the weather worsening Bill and Liz Prichard, Jean Norman, Joan and I opted for a harbour tour by boat. An excellent commentary given by the boat's skipper gave us an insight to the numerous vessels, both commissioned and decommissioned of the Royal Navy. On completion of this trip we now faced some serious rain and our objective was shelter and something to eat. A recommendation of a nearby fish restaurant was taken up and we all enjoyed a hearty meal, fish and chips, of course.



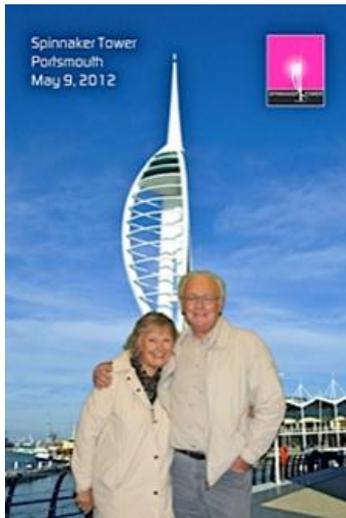
It was then decided that a visit to HMS Victory was a must, with weather improving we headed in that direction. The "Victory" is the oldest commissioned warship in the world and is the Flagship of the Commander in the Chief Naval Home Command. It was launched in May 1765 and remained in active service until 1812. Visits to the Admiral's cabin, various gun decks and hospitalisation quarters gave us an insight into life on board in that era. The ship's crew were preparing the dining room for a dinner about to be attended by The Duke of York.

Also some members visited HMS Warrior, the world's first iron-hulled armoured warship powered by steam as well as sail, and it was the most advanced ship the Victorians had ever seen. She was launched in 1860.

After a full and entertaining day we left Portsmouth returning to Coventry early evening.

*Alan Foster*, Events Organiser

## A call for assistance



Alan Foster has been organising WRSA events for 6 years and always manages to find places that interest a range of members. The coaches are very comfortable and the outings are very good value for money.

Alan needs a bit of a rest and would like to get some help with the organisation of future events. If you have an interest in doing this please indicate this on the Questionnaire or get in touch with Alan or a member of the WRSA Committee.

This picture was taken on the Portsmouth trip and shows the camera does sometimes lie. Sadly on that day of our visit the blue skies were only in our hearts and minds not in reality. However, Alan does all of this with great efficiency and always a smile on his face.

## Invited contribution

### Volunteers aged 65+ needed for research at the University of Warwick

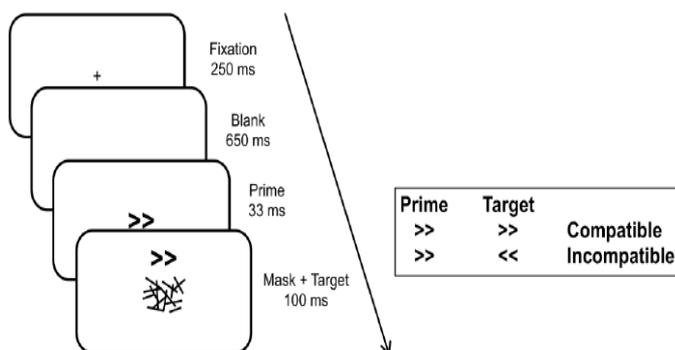
Researchers in the Department of Psychology at the University of Warwick are calling for volunteers aged 65 and over, across Coventry and Warwickshire to help them by participating in some research from time to time. The researchers do have a small fund to cover reasonable travel costs to the University.

Examples of past and current research projects where we used volunteers are below:

#### **PAST RESEARCH**

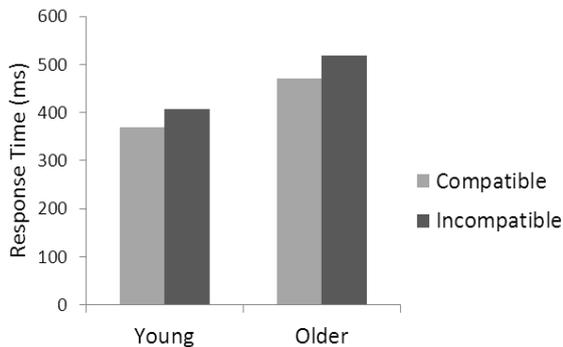
##### Automatic processes as we grow older

Participants sat at a computer and were asked to press a button with their left hand if they saw left-pointing arrows and a button with their right hand if they saw right-pointing arrows. Just prior to the appearance of the target arrows, some “prime” arrows were presented very briefly, for 33 thousandths of a second (see diagram below). The prime was immediately covered up by a mask of jumbled lines to make sure that it could not be identified. On half of the trials, the prime and target arrows pointed in the same direction (compatible trials), while on the other half of the trials, they pointed in the opposite direction (incompatible trials).



As we expected, older volunteers were slower to respond to the target arrows in comparison with young volunteers (see graph below). But the overall age difference was only around a

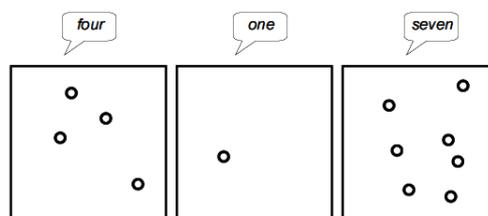
tenth of a second. There was clear evidence that the primes had been processed at some level because responses to targets were slightly, but reliably, faster on compatible trials than on incompatible trials. More surprisingly, this was equally true of young and older volunteers. In fact, compatible primes speeded up responses by about 40 thousandths of a second in young adults and by about 50 thousandths of a second in older adults.



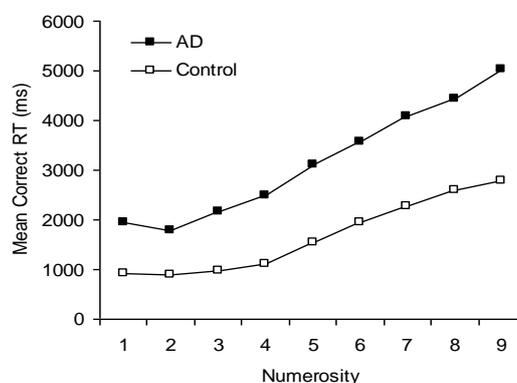
These results add to growing evidence that some automatic processes, of which we are entirely unaware, remain intact in old age. The next step will be to see how these preserved processes can help to compensate for other processes that are impaired by ageing.

### Diagnostic test for Alzheimer's disease

Healthy control volunteers were needed to try out a possible new diagnostic test for Alzheimer's disease, to compare with data from patients provided by our colleagues in the Medical School. The test was a very simple one: circles appeared on the computer screen and volunteers had to say as quickly as possible how many there were.



You can see from the graph below that it took healthy control volunteers between 1 and 3 seconds to count 1-9 circles but those with Alzheimer's disease were much slower. Also the difference between the two groups grew as the number of circles increased.



The researcher tested not only patients with Alzheimer's disease but also patients with another form of dementia, vascular dementia. They too were slower at counting the circles

when compared with the control sample. So although the test distinguished between healthy controls and those with dementia, it was not able to distinguish between the different forms of dementia.

This remains a challenge for researchers who are trying to develop simple diagnostic tests that can be administered easily by GPs without expensive equipment or invasive tests.

## **CURRENT RESEARCH**

### Healthy ageing and memory

Questions include: how do older adults approach settings where multiple tasks have to be fulfilled at the same time? How do we select relevant information in our everyday life? For instance, research shows that older adults may have a tough time tuning out irrelevant information, such as focusing on one voice when many are speaking. We consider that research in this area is really needed in order to improve one's quality of living and we are working towards that end.

### Balance Research

Everyday body coordination such as standing and walking are highly practiced acts, demanding little conscious effort as compared to the mental effort we devote to many higher level cognitive activities (such as memory and imagery tasks). Yet research shows that performing an attentive cognitive activity, especially a spatial one, alongside a basic coordination task such as standing or walking can detrimentally affect posture control, whilst also degrading cognitive task performance. One proposed source of this interference is a competition for limited information-processing capacity that is shared by mental and physical tasks.

This present research aims to explore why older people may avoid being mobile and why falls occur as we get older. It is hoped that findings from this research can be used towards fall prevention in the older population.

### Further Balance Research

A further study explores the use of movement imagery in rehabilitation following brain trauma (such as in stroke). Research shows that imagined movements are planned in much the same level of detail as actual ones. This has led researchers to explore whether movement imagery can be of therapeutic value during rehabilitation. We are looking at imagery of sit-to-stand movements, a key stage in physiotherapy during stroke rehabilitation.



From left to right: Kanokwan Srisupornkornkool, Nicola Doherty, Dr Joy Mitra and Professor Elizabeth Maylor

Anyone wishing to find out more about volunteering should phone Nicola Doherty on 02476 522 774 or email [n.doherty@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:n.doherty@warwick.ac.uk)

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