



Renewing the University Website

The consultants' review of the University website – reported in last month's issue of *BITs* – highlighted a number of ways in which the site could be improved, including a more uniform appearance, better differentiation between external and internal audiences, improved user experience, user-centred navigation, and better 'brand presence'.

The recommendations have been translated into three objectives, all aimed at making better use of technology to deliver a more sophisticated site with less effort. These objectives are:

- a unified site to handle internal and external communication, for example through the use of standard templates and structured navigation;
- organisation and process design, for example by establishing editorial and publishing processes;
- technical issues, covering such matters as workflow, content management, interaction with University systems such as MyEd, and infrastructure support.

Simon Marsden, Director of MIS, has convened a working group – with representatives from around the University – to carry out a scoping study that aims to quantify the scale of the task in sufficient detail to allow the technical resources required to deliver it to be defined and costed. The intention is to complete this work by August. The implementation of the new site is likely to be phased over a two-year period, with initial delivery within the first twelve months.

The overall project is under the supervision of Ian Conn, Director of Communications and External Affairs. Further information is available at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/webpub/redevelopment/>

*Ian Conn (CPA)
Simon Marsden (MIS)*

Major advance in managing visitor access

EUCS and MIS systems make it easier to give the University's visitors access to services.

See page 2.

New support for staff and student training

A new study will determine what systems should be put in place to support personal development.

See page 3.

eLearning enhancements

More technical resources and an eLearning course from MALTS; new online courses arranged by EUCS.

See page 5.

High performance computing

Edinburgh continues to play a leading role in the development and application of high performance computers.

See page 7.



Untamed tigers can bite!

See page 3.

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Silver Surfers Day

This year, "Silver Surfers' Day" is on Friday 27th May, drawing attention to the aim of helping 10,000 people over the age of 50 to cross the digital divide. See <http://www.silversurfersday.org/>

Big step forward for the administration of visitors to the University

MIS and EUCS have been working together to link the University's Visitor Registration Service, developed by MIS, to the Identity Management Service, developed by EUCS. The linked-up service was launched on 19th April, enabling Schools to register their visitors for computer accounts for various central IT services, in addition to the access control cards already available.

Anyone who wants to use central IT services at the University – such as electronic mail, the computing labs and wireless networks – must have an 'account' on one or more computers, consisting of a Universal User Name and a password.

Staff and students are automatically registered with the University's Identity Management Service (IDMS), and through that are automatically registered for a range of services.

Other people, officially called *visitors*, need to be registered in the Visitor Registration Service (VRS) by the Administrator or Computing Officer of the School or College they are visiting. The joining of the VRS and IDMS systems helps Schools and Units to manage visitor IT facilities, by providing the visitor with a username and password and defining the services that can be accessed by that username. It removes the need for individual paper registrations for each service. The services which each category of visitor can receive without charge are listed at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/policies/entitlement.pdf>

The long-term aim of the Visitor Registration Service is to provide a mechanism for recording the presence of visitors on University property, requesting access to some central services (including a multi-function card), and ensuring that visitors meet the University's obligations for Health and Safety, insurance *etc.*

There is full information about the VRS, including how to gain its benefits and the enhancements being planned for it, on its website at

<http://www.visitor-registration.ed.ac.uk/>

Registering for EUCS services

The joining of the IDMS and VRS systems coincides with a new release of a portal on the IDMS which allows easier selection of services for everyone – staff, students and visitors. Visitors, staff and students may select certain extra services as and when they require them (or the Computing Officer of their School can do so on their behalf). Some services require the Computing Officer to select the services. This is explained at

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/isd/accounts/>



Visitors who are not entitled to a free service may register to use EUCS services on payment of a fee: these people are then classed as *visitors to Computing Services*, and they are the only ones who still need to fill in a paper registration form, which is available from EUCS Sales Points.

There is a fuller description at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/admin/register.html>

Scott Currie (EUCS)
Bryan MacGregor (MIS)

MyEd access for University visitors

MyEd will this month become available to University 'non staff' (staff-like) visitors who have their visit registered within the new Visitor Registration System (VRS) which went live in April. This is significant, in that many systems within the University are used by associates and visitors who are not on the University's main payroll but in essence work like other staff within the institution.

Visitors when entering MyEd will be presented with a default layout very similar to that already used by current staff. They will however receive, on their work tab, a *Visitor Details* channel that displays their personal details associated with the current visit. In addition, the MyEd Announcement system will be enabled to include visitors, with the additional facility to filter messages to specific types of visitor category or organisational unit.

Non Student (or 'Student-like') visitors will be enabled for access to MyEd over the coming year. Plans anticipate that this group will be given access to MyEd within a similar time frame to current students, *i.e.* in time for the new semester in September.

Visitors who try to log in to MyEd and see a message saying that they are not authorised to use it should contact their Computing Officer or Computer Rep, as they may need their records to be updated within the VRS system.

Further information regarding visitor access to MyEd will be provided at <http://www.eportal.mis.ed.ac.uk/>

Mark Wetton (MIS)

Supporting personal and professional development

Roberts Review funding of £10,000 has been approved for a scoping study of the information framework which supports personal and professional development of all University students and staff. This includes promotion of training and development opportunities, mechanisms for managing course bookings, links to Personal Development Planning (PDP) and portfolio tools.

Requirements of individual students, staff and training providers will be studied, together with the need for University reporting, management and planning. Existing systems and practice within and outwith the University will be reviewed, and recommendations will be developed for building an integrated information framework, taking into account interoperability standards and specifications, organisation and structure. A key output will be a proposal for a 3–5 year development programme, with a range of costed options for investment.

The study specification will be finalised this month, and the study will report by Autumn 2005. Results will be presented to the Information Technology Committee (ITC). The background information presented to ITC in April is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ucsinfo/cttees/itc/2005-04-20/paperD.html>

For further information please contact Jon Turner, Director of the Postgraduate Transferable Skills Unit (email j.d.turner@ed.ac.uk).

Jon Turner (Transferable Skills)

Recommended computers and Web browsers

Every year, MIS and EUCS work together to define the 'minimum' and 'recommended' configurations of Windows, Mac and Linux computers which can be supported. Computers below the minimum level are not guaranteed to run the University's corporate systems adequately, and cannot be fixed if they go wrong.

Similarly MIS and EUCS choose a set of Web browsers for Windows, Mac and Linux on which all the University's Web applications – such as WISARD and Staffmail – should work without problems.

This year's recommendations are listed in papers A and B to the IT Committee, at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ucsinfo/cttees/itc/2005-04-20/papers.html>

Brian Gilmore (EUCS)

Would you like a hand managing a project?

MIS has been gathering together its experience in managing projects over many years, and as a first step in making this expertise available to the University community it has created a website containing tools and templates which others might find useful in creating and managing their own projects.

The new site contains links to various projects currently under way, and will build up an archive of completed projects which will become a useful source of wisdom and inspiration.

At this stage the website is a 'consultation exercise' to help us find out what people would like from it. If you manage projects we would be pleased to hear what you think of the site: please email feedback to Simon.Marsden@ed.ac.uk.

The Projects Website is at <http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/>
Simon Marsden (MIS)

Tiger joins Apple's cat dynasty

The 'Tiger' version of Mac OS X was released on 29th April, bringing with it many much-discussed and eagerly-awaited new features.

If you are considering upgrading a University Mac, please contact your EUCS Support Team to discuss the options, as EUCS has not yet finished evaluating the new system and integrating it into the Edinburgh IT environment.

Jeff Phillips (EUCS)

The EUCS Tiger Project

EUCS has initiated a project to build on its general experience with supported desktops. The scope, resources and timescales of the project are still being defined, and as project leader I would be pleased to hear any concerns or ideas you might have (email K.MacDonald@ed.ac.uk).

In the meantime, you should continue to take any Mac-related problems to your EUCS Support Team.

Kenny MacDonald (EUCS)

Upgrading to Tiger

People who joined the Apple Maintenance Programme negotiated by EUCS (see *BITs*, May 2004) are entitled to a free upgrade to Tiger for their University Mac, and EUCS is contacting site representatives about this.

The EUCS licence does not cover home computers, for which Tiger can be bought through the Apple Store (with an education discount for staff and students on proof of status).

The publishers of 'TidBITS', the weekly Mac newsletter, have organised four eBooks on various aspects of upgrading to Tiger, available from <http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/>

Scotsys is offering new courses for a range of audiences. For details see <http://www.scotsys.co.uk/training/>

Joyce Anderson (EUCS)

EDINA's Historic Map service

EDINA has launched the Digimap Historic Map Pilot Service, which provides access to Landmark historic Ordnance Survey maps of Great Britain dating from the mid 1850s to the early 1990s. Maps available include:

- all available County Series maps at 1:2,500 and 1:10,560 scales published between 1843 and 1939;
- all available National Grid maps at 1:1,250, 1:2,500 and 1:10,560/10,000 scales published from 1945 and before the introduction of the OS digital Land-Line product.

The historic maps can be viewed online, printed, and downloaded as images for use in image processing and GIS software. The service allows simultaneous comparison of up to four maps of the same location at different dates.

For further information about the service visit <http://edina.ed.ac.uk/digimap/development/historic.html>

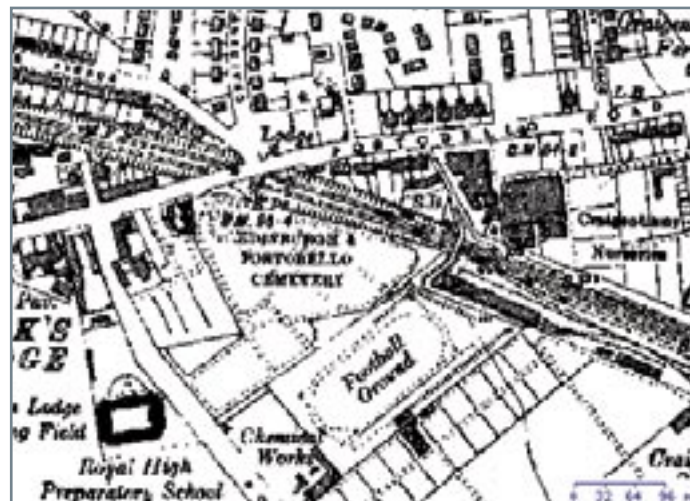
Edinburgh University users can try out the service until 31st May, using computers on the University network. Instructions and access to the service are available at <http://datalib.ed.ac.uk/historic/trial.htm>

For the purposes of subscription evaluation please send your feedback regarding the Pilot Service to datalib@ed.ac.uk.

Note: downloaded data must be destroyed after the trial period has expired.

Stuart Macdonald, Tim Riley (EDINA)

For more news about maps, this time on a European scale, see *European maps and data* on page 8.



Historic Ordnance Survey County Series maps of the Craighentiny area of Edinburgh, showing landscape changes from the mid 1800s to the 1930s.

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MALTS support for eLearning

The MALTS E-Learning team has been working on a range of new developments, and enhancements to existing services.

WebCT CE: Cutting Edge

All University staff now have access to Cutting Edge, a course within the WebCT Virtual Learning Environment which has a dual role: to demonstrate some of WebCT's potential for enhancing teaching and learning, and to provide a place for staff to exchange views, make suggestions, and share experience.

The course, which is listed on the WebCT channel in MyEd, contains a wide range of useful documentation and suggestions for using WebCT within the University. It also contains demonstrators of the tools and developments noted below. For further information contact webct@ed.ac.uk.

WebPoll Tool

The MALTS team has developed a simple web-based tool which allows any user to create a single-question 'poll' on a web page. A question can have up to 20 selected responses, which may be a Lickert scale for qualitative data as well as quantitative answers. A summary chart of responses is instantly available. If you are interested in using this polling tool see <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/services/webpoll/>

Please note: this is not suitable for multiple questions or surveys. MALTS is exploring the possibility of licensing a simple web-based survey tool for lengthier surveys.

Will you Blog?

A simple web-based blogging tool has been developed for embedding

into WebCT courses. This allows students to make reflective entries in a log which are visible only to themselves and the course tutor.

If you want to know more about weblogs, or have used them and have experiences to share, come along to the e-break on Weblogs on Monday 16th May. For further information see <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/issues/news/ebreaks.phtml>

WebBoard

MALTS supports this specialist web-based discussion board which provides a slightly different set of functionality from the discussion board built into WebCT. We have now linked these two applications so that staff can make use of WebBoard within their WebCT courses instead of WebCT's own discussion tool.

The general opinion is that WebBoard's user interface is somewhat more intuitive and easier to navigate than WebCT's, but board management may be somewhat more complex. You can try this out on the WebCT CE: Cutting Edge course. WebBoard continues to be available to staff for use as a standalone application. For further information see <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/services/CMC/>

Testing with Perception

A link has been established between WebCT and Questionmark Perception, the University's dedicated objective testing software. This allows staff to create tests within Perception, using the more sophisticated range of questions available there. The system passes on authorisation information, so users can go directly to the test from their WebCT course. A limited set of

data on test results can be passed back into WebCT for further analysis.

Please note: this system is helpful for formative assessment but is not suitable for summative assessment, for which we recommend the full standalone Perception application.

MALTS and EUCS have recently assisted a number of Schools in running large-scale summative assessments using Perception and the secure web browser facility. For example, over 300 students sat a Psychology exam using computer labs at KB and George Square. Perception has also been used by Human Resources to run a web-based survey of all University staff, handling several thousand responses without any technical problem.

For further information see <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/services/CAA/perception.phtml>
Wilma Alexander (MALTS)

eLearning course

An introduction to digital environments for learning – a 20-credit online course – ran successfully last semester, delivered by MALTS and Higher and Community Education.

The course offered an insight into how Internet technologies can be used for supporting learning, and gave participants the chance to gain first-hand experience of how it feels to be an e-learner. Twenty-six members of staff took part, drawn from across the Schools and support services.

The course ran as a pilot for an MSc in eLearning planned by the School of Education. There is information about the course on its website (<http://www.malts.ed.ac.uk/idel/>), or from Sian Bayne (email sian.bayne@ed.ac.uk).

Sian Bayne (Education)

CTS: Communication and Training Services

Information Services is the name of the group headed by Vice Principal Helen Hayes, and comprises the Library, DCC, EDINA, MALTS and EUCS. There has been some confusion lately with the name of the Information Services Section of EUCS, so this team has been renamed Communication and Training Services – CTS.

CTS promotes the effective use of C&IT with a range of information sources including taught courses, online and paper publications, online self-paced learning resources, and publications such as *BITs*.

Our website is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/cts/>

Jean Ritchie (CTS, EUCS)

New eLearning opportunity

CTS has recently expanded the range of online learning opportunities it provides for University staff, by obtaining a site licence for THOMSON/NETg courses.

This provides access to over 200 courses on computing topics (Microsoft Office, Frontpage, Outlook, Photoshop *etc*), and also professional development topics, on such subjects as time management, project management, managing a meeting, and stress management.

These courses are only for University employees. They can be used anywhere at any time, and can be downloaded for offline use. Full details are at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/cts/courses/elearn.html>

Tracey Athay (EUCS)

Legal Aspects of Online Learning Environments

This conference at the University of Warwick on 1–2 June 2005 will examine legal issues in education, which are a growing concern – for example an aggrieved student seeking damages and raising negative publicity, or the quality inspection declaring no confidence due to non-compliance.

VLEs and MLEs are often developed on a technology-first, pedagogy-second, anything-else-is-afterthought model. This may lead to a variety of problems and potential disasters.

The Conference will deal with these issues head on. For details, visit http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/events/o6_OLE_Warwick.htm

Sue Fells (UCISA)

Easier access to IEEE and IEE full-text

A major upgrade to the IEEE Xplore online delivery platform took place in March 2005.

The new platform, IEEE Xplore 2.0, has numerous additional search enhancements to make full-text searching of all content (currently more than 1.1 million documents) easier, including:

- a more functional design
- reorganized help content
- clearer identification of documents you may access
- new 'homepages' for all IEEE periodicals and conference proceedings

Please note that any bookmarks to other pages within IEEE Xplore will need to be updated. A full product overview, HTML and PDF user guides and an IEEExplore demonstration are available online.

Access is through <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/>

Off-campus access requires a password, which you can get at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/secure/accounts.html>

For further information contact sarah.kelly@ed.ac.uk.

Sarah Kelly (EUL)

SUNCAT steps into the light

SUNCAT, the Serials UNION CATalogue for the UK, was launched as a pilot service in February, at a symposium in London. It includes over four million records of journal and newspaper articles and annual reports from 22 of the UK's leading university and research libraries. Users can track down an article through SUNCAT, then readily find out where the journal is held. The intention is that SUNCAT will become the key online UK facility for serials, enabling ready access to articles online.

JISC has now given the go-ahead for Phase 2, to establish SUNCAT as a full service, with continuously increasing coverage of other university and specialist research libraries, increased functionality, inclusion of information on open-access journals, and the standard representation of information on electronic subscription.

SUNCAT has been developed at the University by EDINA and the Library in partnership with ExLibris, providing and adapting the Aleph 500 software. You can try the Pilot Service at <http://edina.ac.uk/suncat/>

Peter Burnhill (EDINA)

Viruses in the World Cup

Windows users are being warned not to open a virus that poses as a message from football body Fifa. Some of the messages sent by the virus tell users that they have won tickets to the World Cup in Germany in 2006. The virus seems to have caught a lot of people out, because its release coincided with a mailout from Fifa telling fans about tickets.

There are further details at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4512421.stm>

The BBC

Computing at the leading edge

Both Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC) and the National e-Science Centre (NeSC) are involved in postgraduate opportunities in high performance computing. These can lead to careers at the forefront of science and technology.

EPCC's MSc in High Performance Computing (HPC) has been running for five years, and leads to one of the few university-accredited postgraduate HPC qualifications in Europe. The EPCC MSc has recently become a prerequisite for further research in this advanced field; it is described at

<http://www.epcc.ed.ac.uk/msc/>

NeSC is involved in the new e-Science MSc/Diploma, launched as e-Science and Grid technologies are maturing and coming to provide the computational infrastructure supporting real scientific research. Initially a collaboration between the Schools of Physics and Informatics, it is anticipated that further Schools will join this multi-disciplinary programme in later years. Further information is available online at http://www.ph.ed.ac.uk/postgraduate/degrees/msc_escience.html or from the Programme Director, Bob Mann (email rgm@roe.ac.uk).

eScience events

There are several HPC events at the NeSC in forthcoming weeks, such as the PPARC UK e-Science Postgraduate School on 9–13 May; further information is at <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/544/>

There is a meeting about Ubiquitous Computing and e-Research on 18–19 May, as described at <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/530/>

CCGrid 2005, Cluster Computing and GRID, is on 9–12 May in Cardiff; see http://www.nesc.ac.uk/news/articles_and_calls/CCGrid05call.html

ScicomP11, the IBM System Scientific Computing User Group, runs from 31st May to 3rd June in Edinburgh; see <http://www.epcc.ed.ac.uk/scicom/>

Anna Kenway (NeSC)

Tracy Peet (EPCC)



EC-funded research visit opportunities in computational science

Call for applications: next closing date 31st May 2005

HPC-Europa, a consortium of 11 leading European centres, is calling for applications from researchers working in Europe to visit one of more than 200 research institutes associated with the Transnational Access programme. Visitors will use HPC-Europa's High Performance Computing (HPC) facilities to advance their research, while collaborating with scientific researchers from an appropriate local research institute.

The programme is fully funded by the EC's *Structuring the European Research Area* programme, and offers:

- access to some of the most powerful HPC facilities in Europe;
- HPC consultancy from experienced staff;
- opportunities to collaborate with scientists working in related fields at a local research institute;
- travel costs, subsistence expenses and accommodation.

The six HPC-Europa centres offering Transnational Access are: CEPBA (Spain), CINECA (Italy), EPCC (UK), HLRS (Germany), IDRIS (France) and SARA (the Netherlands).

The selection panel approves applications on the basis of scientific merit. For this reason, applicants are encouraged, where possible, to identify a suitable researcher with whom to collaborate before applying, as this often increases the chances of the application being approved.

HPC-Europa is funded until the end of 2007. Selection meetings are held four times per year, and applications must be received by 31st May 2005 for the selection meeting in June. Successful applicants will visit for between three and 13 weeks, starting during the period from July to December 2005.

Further information and the online application form are available at <http://www.hpc-europa.org/>

If you have any questions, please contact the HPC-EUROPA team at access@hpc-europa.org.

Irina Nazarova (EPCC)

Innovations in scholarly communication

A CERN Workshop on Innovations in Scholarly Communication (OAI4) takes place on 20–22 October 2005. This fourth workshop in the series, which began life as the Open Archives Initiative Workshop in 2001, is a forum for technical issues associated with scholarly communication.

Details and registration information are on the conference website at <http://cern.ch/oai4/>

Submissions are welcome until 31st May, on scholarly communication, managing repositories, and the distribution of primary scientific data.

Thomas Krichel (OA14)

Online ordering – delayed to be better

The planned mid-April launch of online ordering via the Higher Education eProcurement tool (HEeP) was put back a month, to enable enhancements to be made to stationery supplier Office Depot's website. This will enable University users to 'punch out' to the supplier's website via HEeP, having already logged in through the University's core financial system, eFinancials.

The benefits of this are to allow a simple requisition creation and approval flow, to inspire confidence that orders will progress quickly, to minimise processing costs and to access the University's best-value-for-money terms from the supplier. Procurement is working closely with FIS and MIS to roll out access to the online ordering system across the University, with an increasing number of the top product suppliers added over the next six months.

The tool is set to be used by staff in CHSS first, starting in mid May.

Graham Cook (Procurement)

BCS meets GCHQ

At the last local BCS meeting of the season, David Killen of GCHQ will talk about the *Mathematics of Search Engines*. The meeting, which is open to the general public, will be held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 11th May at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place. Further details are provided at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/meets.htm>

David Muxworthy (BCS)

Correction

In last month's *BITs* I inadvertently recruited the University's Web Editor Bryan Martin to EUCS; Bryan is of course in CPA.

My apologies for this slip.

Nick Stroud (EUCS)

Holidays this month

Much of the University will be observing the May and Victoria Holidays, on **Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th May**.

The Main Library and most site libraries will be open for their usual semester times on these days (see following article). All staffed services provided by EUCS will be closed. The open-access labs in the Main Library will be available, with a Supervisor on duty. Students will also be able to use the 24-hour High School Yards and KB Centre labs.

(Editor)

Opening hours in the Library

As for the December examinations, the Main Library is providing study space on the ground, first and second floors until midnight every day (including weekends) during Consolidation and Exams – that is, until 27th May. (Note that no services are provided in the extended hours – only study space.) To date this has been well used, with several hundred students present until late in the evening.

Open-access computers on the ground, first and second floors will be available until midnight, but those on the third and fourth floors will shut down at the usual closing times.

On 23rd and 24th May – the University Holidays – the Main, Vet (Summerhall), Moray House and Law Libraries will be open with limited services, primarily in support of those working for exams. The Main Library will be open from 8:30am to midnight, Vet, Moray House and Law from 9am to 10pm.

For the fullest and most up-to-date information, see 'opening hours' in *Library Online*.

David Ferro (EUL)

European maps and data

The EuroGlobalMap trial service offers a seamless digital map dataset for Europe at a scale of 1:1 million.

Users can view and download for free Europe-wide data provided by EuroGeographics, an organisation representing the majority of Europe's national mapping agencies.

The small scale means the data will be of most use for background mapping, for example as contextual data for use in remotely-sensed imagery at regional or global scales.

EuroGlobalMap is part of a global initiative in response to Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Earth Summit.

A feedback form is provided and we look forward to receiving comments on the usefulness of this data, which will be available at least until September 2005. For more information and to find out how to access the trial service go to <http://edina.ac.uk/maps/global.shtml>

Emma Sutton (EDINA)

EDINBURGH BITs

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NB: if you fail to access a URL shown in *BITs*, please email BITs@ed.ac.uk.

Contributions to *BITs* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for June *BITs*:

Wednesday 18th May