We are pleased to announce that Prof. Michael Geoffrey Somekh has assumed duty on 6 January as Chair Professor of Biophotonics and Head of the Department. Prof. Somekh received a Master of Art degree in Metallurgy and Materials Science from the University of Oxford in 1976 and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Microwave Electronics from the University of Lancaster in 1981. Before joining PolyU, he was Professor of Optical Engineering, Head of Applied Optics Group and Director of Institute of Biophysics Imaging and Optical Science of the University of Nottingham.

Prof. Somekh's two major research strands are laser ultrasonics for materials characterisation and novel optical techniques in biological imaging. Prof. Somekh with his research group pioneered and developed novel means to control the optical beam and hence the resulting ultrasonic distribution. New methods of optical imaging have been developed. In particular, he has pioneered work in high resolution surface plasmon microscopy, a technique that gives very sensitive measure of changes in surface structure and properties. Prof. Somekh has worked on the development of novel detectors for optical imaging and has carried out a programme to develop novel arrays using commercially available integrated circuit technology. His work has attracted considerable funding and several of the techniques developed in his group have been commercialized and current developments also have considerable commercial potential.

In recognition of Prof. Somekh’s interdisciplinary work in the application of engineering principles to materials science and biology, Prof. Somekh was elected a Fellow of Royal Academy of Engineering in 2012. Besides, he is a Fellow of Institute of Physics and a Chartered Engineer. Prof. Somekh also serves on the College Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Panel for Equipment Grants Royal Society and is an External Reviewer for the Research Excellence Framework in the United Kingdom.

Congratulations to Dr Ben Cheng who has received the CyberC 2013 Program Chair Excellence Award from the International Conference on Cyber-Enabled Distributed Computing and Knowledge Discovery held last October in Beijing, China! Dr Cheng has been serving the conference as the workshop Co-chair and the Chairperson of CyberC’s associated workshop, International Workshop on Smart Sensor Networks (IWSSN), since 2012. The aim of the aforementioned workshop is to gather latest research breakthroughs in the area of sensor networks development, especially for their applications in smart power distribution systems, intelligent public transport services, pervasive health technologies and social networks. The workshop is running into its third anniversary and the next meeting will be held in Shanghai, China in the coming October. Interested parties can contact Dr Cheng or visit http://www.cyberc.org/index.asp for more information about the workshop.

Prof. Curtis Menyuk, our Visiting Chair Professor comes from the University of Maryland Baltimore Country, USA, paid a visit to the Department between 9 and 29 January. Prof. Menyuk delivered a seminar entitled “Solitons, Self-Induced Transparency, and Modelocking in Quantum Cascade Lasers” to introduce quantum cascade lasers during his visit on 27 January. Prof. Menyuk received the B.S. and M.S. degrees from MIT in 1976 and the Ph.D. from UCLA in 1981. For the last 25 years, his primary research area has been theoretical and computational studies of lasers, nonlinear optics, and fiber optic communications. He is a fellow of the American Physical Society, the Optical Society of America, and the IEEE. He is also a former UMBC Presidential Research Professor and the winner of the 2013 IEEE Photonics Society William Strieffer Award.
MARCH ISSUE

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PLASMA APPLICATION AND HYBRID FUNCTIONALLY MATERIALS

The Department successfully co-organized the 7th International Workshop on Plasma Application and Hybrid Functionally Materials from 7 to 10 March. The Workshop attracted over 50 participants from countries like Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Poland, Saudi Arabia and mainland China. Participants exchanged ideas and presented results related to plasma applications, including applications to microelectronics and environmental problems, as well as applications to high-energy sources, such as electron, ion and laser beams.

SEMINAR BY DR MELISSA MATHER FROM UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Dr Melissa Mather, Principal Research Fellow of the Institute of Biophysics, Imaging and Optical Science, University of Nottingham, conducted a seminar in the Department on 17 March. In the seminar “Real time, label-free characterisation of live cells in monolayer culture using high resolution, multi-modal light microscopy”, Dr Mather reported a novel multi-modal light microscope for non-invasive, label-free characterisation of live cells. The research expertise of Dr Mather lies in the non-invasive monitoring of cells and tissue. She is currently a holder of an EPSRC Career Acceleration Fellowship developing ultrasound nano-transducers for tracking of cells used in Regenerative Medicine and co-investigator on the EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Regenerative Medicine.

INFORMATION SESSION OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

An Information Session of EIE Undergraduate Degree Programmes was held on 21 January in the campus. Dr C.K. Leung and Dr Frank Leung, our programme leaders, introduced the BEng in EIE and BSc in IMT programmes to about 200 higher diploma and advanced standing students from our Department and other institutions. The participants were very impressed by knowing more on how these two programmes could prepare them to embark on a career in the engineering profession.

EXCHANGE ACTIVITY WITH KOREAN STUDENTS

Four undergraduate students from the Electronic Engineering Department of the Korea Polytechnic University were received by Prof. Francis Lau when they visited the Department on 6 January. As part of the Korea Polytechnic University’s Global Challenge Programme, a meeting between the Korean and EIE students was held to discuss the mobile industry in China and Hong Kong. Our students also shared their learning and living experiences with their Korean counterparts through this exchange activity.
EIE South Korea Study Tour

A South Korea Study Tour was organized for 30 EIE students between 7 and 11 January. Led by Dr Zheru Chi, our students visited the Korea Polytechnic University, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), the Korea Gas Corporation, the Samsung Exhibition Center, the National Museum of Korea and the Korean Demilitarized Zone during the tour. All participants found this trip very meaningful as it provided a valuable opportunity to explore the tertiary education, history, culture and technology development of South Korea.

Delegation from Korea Polytechnic University

Prof. Jeho Lee, General Manager of the International Student Affairs Team, and 36 students from the Korea Polytechnic University, paid a visit to the Department on 26 February. The visit was kicked start by a meeting to discuss the collaboration and student exchange programme between two institutions. The Korean delegation also visited the Optical Communications and Networking Research Laboratory, the Virtual Reality Laboratory, the Microfabrication Laboratory and other facilities of the Department.

Career Talk by Harmonic Technologies (HK) Ltd.

A career talk conducted by the Harmonic Technologies (HK) Ltd. was held on 12 February for our undergraduate and postgraduate students. Headquartered in California, Harmonic is a leading provider of video delivery solutions to broadcast, cable, satellite, Internet and mobile providers worldwide. Mr Chen Zhang and Mr Liu Long, two graduates from the BEng in EIE and BSc in IMT programmes respectively who are now working for this company, also came back to the Department to share their enthusiasm for working in the information and communications technology industry.

Collaboration with RS Components

The Department has come to an agreement on collaboration with RS Components, a global industrial component distributor, recently. RS Components would support the Department’s teaching activities by providing licenses for powerful design tools like DesignSpark PCB and DesignSpark Mechanical, and hardware development platforms like Arduino and Raspberry Pi. RS Components would also provide training workshops, company visits and internship opportunities in future. The Department will continue to seek for collaborations of this kind with our industrial partners actively for the benefit of our staff and students.