

LHC First Beam



10th September 2008

Students visiting the University of Birmingham start off their academic year by sharing a moment in history!

On September 10th 2008, the first proton beam was finally injected into the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN – scheduled for 9.30am Geneva time, 8.30am BST – an historic moment for Particle Physics.

Some school students visiting the University of Birmingham had an opportunity to get personally involved by taking part in the only UK video link to the ATLAS control room on this day.

The Birmingham Particle Physics Group works on two of the LHC experiments, ALICE and ATLAS - both very large international collaborations.

Around 100 A Level (and some GCSE) students from seven different schools in Birmingham, Walsall, Stafford, Wolverhampton, Warwickshire, Telford & Wrekin & Lancashire arrived on campus for around 10.30am – all buzzing with the latest updates from BBC and Radio 4.

Then some other members of the group, many of whom had been up since very early to monitor progress of the beam turn on, were able to display and talk about the very latest news and pictures from CERN.



Students getting to grips with the LHC tunnel!



Prof Peter Watkins chairing the Birmingham end of the CERN-Birmingham video link.

At 1pm, the live video link took place, with introductions and explanations from a panel of researchers at CERN, chaired by Dr Mick Storr, Coordinator of CERN Teacher Support Programmes and Education Officer, and involving more of the Birmingham Group out at CERN. Prof Peter Watkins chaired the Birmingham end of the link.

The audience had a real chance to experience some of the excitement first hand, as well as to ask some of their burning questions.

By pure good fortune, a group of students from Edgehill College in Devon, who had won a major prize in our Particle Physics Cascade competition last year, were visiting CERN on this day, and were able to take part in the CERN end of the link. They were able to describe their feelings to the students here in Birmingham – *exciting and surreal!*

The whole event was informative, interesting and lively – truly memorable, and hopefully, inspiring to all those taking part.

Professor Peter Watkins, leader of the Particle Physics Research Group at Birmingham, was able to set the scene with a brief introduction to particle physics and the background to the LHC Experiment.



First pictures of particle collisions from the ATLAS detector!