The background is a deep blue field filled with numerous small, glowing blue particles of varying sizes. Overlaid on this are several large, faint, glowing blue circles and arcs, some of which appear to be part of a larger, complex network or structure. The overall effect is that of a dynamic, scientific or technological environment.

# **RAL/PPD PhD Studentship Practicalities**

Ian Tomalin

# RAL Particle Physics PhD Studentships

❖ RAL Particle Physics Dept. offers 6 funded PhD studentships starting in Autumn 2026:

- Project 1: "QUEST/Darkside: searching for Dark Matter beyond WIMPs with Novel Detector Technologies" (PPD/Oxford)
- Project 2: "Dark Matter, New Physics & Radioassay at the Boulby Mine" (PPD-Boulby/Edinburgh)
- Project 3: "Searching for Dark Matter in final states with low-momentum leptons at the ATLAS experiment at the LHC" (PPD/Liverpool)
- Project 4: "Multi-Parton Dynamics & Exotic Scalar Production in ATLAS at the HL-LHC" (PPD/Warwick)
- Project 5: "LHCb: measurement of the Unitarity Angle Alpha & Development of the Mighty Tracker Readout" (PPD/Glasgow)
- Project 6: "Commissioning/calibration of Hyper-Kamiokande's far detector & development of the experiment's first Neutrino Oscillation Measurement (PPD/Liverpool)

❖ Each studentship has partner university, as RAL can't award degrees.

- Student will be blessed with 2 supervisors (RAL + university)!

# RAL Particle Physics PhD Studentships

❖ Each PhD is 3.5 years long, with typically:

- First 2 terms based at university for lectures/courses there.
- Then year based at RAL, including additional lectures.
- Then year away at experiment (e.g. CERN in Geneva).
- Then back to RAL to complete research & write up thesis.

❖ For each PhD place, the STFC funding agency issues a [PhD grant](#) to the partner university, which covers its "home fees" + stipend for the student's living costs & expenses. (The cost of this is usually shared 50:50 between RAL/PPD & university).

- If a candidate must pay the more expensive "overseas fees", and can't pay the difference in fees themselves, the university can sometimes waive its right to charge "overseas" fees, if the candidate is particularly impressive.

# RAL/PPD PhD Open Day Schedule

Details (maps & Zoom links) in <https://indico.stfc.ac.uk/event/1771/overview>

## ❖ Morning in Conference Room 3 (CR3) in Building R61 [10-12am]:

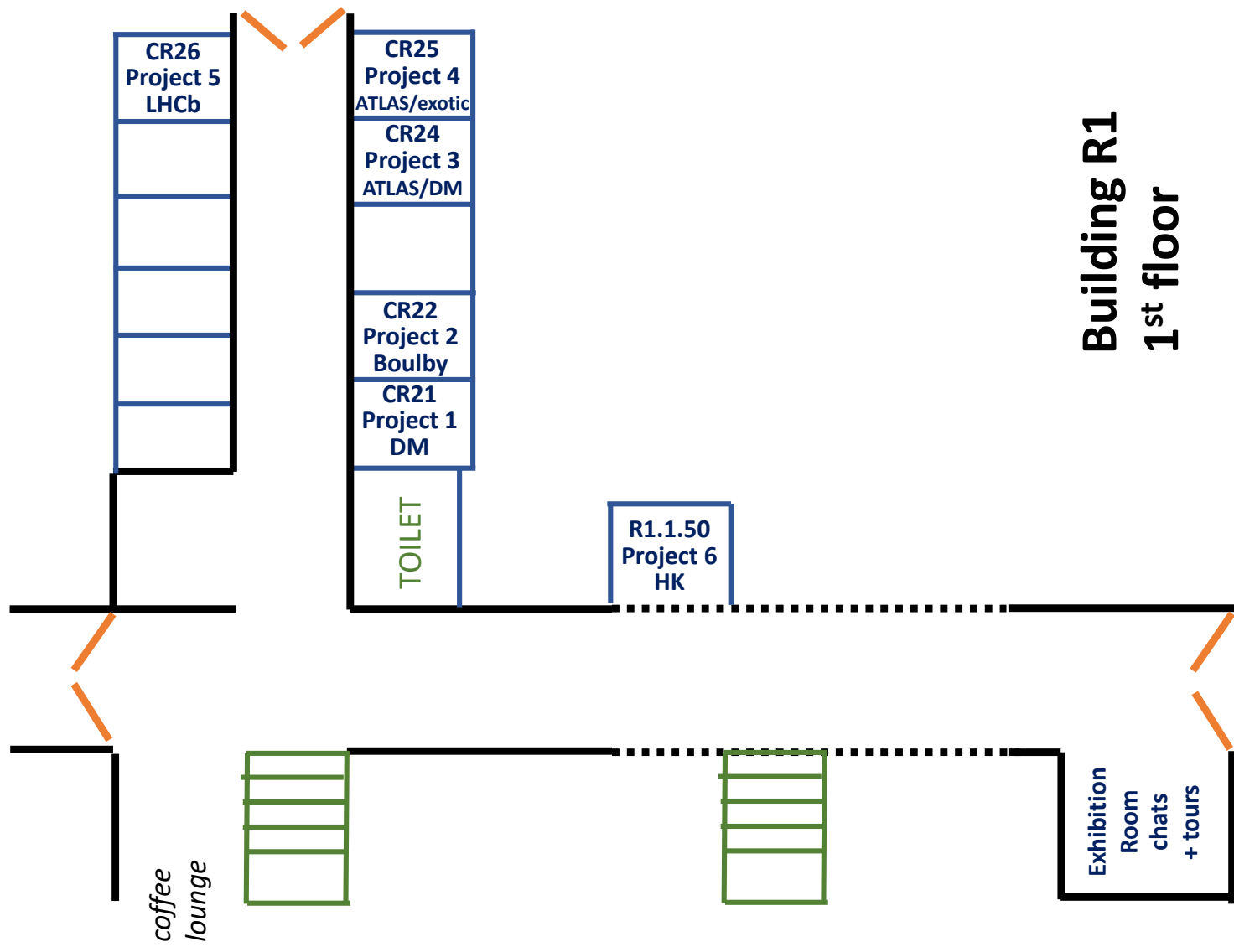
- Presentations on the 6 PhD projects.

## ❖ Lunch in Conference Room 3 [12-1pm]:

- Sign up for afternoon tours of (1) ATLAS + Darkside-20k clean room, (2) LHCb lab.
- Sign up sheet for taxis at the end of the day (e.g. 4:45pm to Didcot station).

## ❖ Afternoon in PPD (R1 1<sup>st</sup> floor) [1-4:30pm]: Interviews with supervisors in 6 small rooms.

- Each chat is 28 mins long + 2 mins transition time.
- ~5 mins of time is for you to ask questions to supervisors.
- In free slots, go to PPD Exhibition Room to chat to students/staff or to join tours, or relax in Coffee Lounge.



**Building R1  
1st floor**

# Schedule of afternoon chats (for students at RAL)

- ❖ The afternoon INTERVIEW SCHEDULE between students & project supervisors is linked from the Open Day overview in indico.
- ❖ We've booked you chats for your 2 favourite projects (from your application form).
- ❖ If morning talks convince you that a 3<sup>rd</sup> project is now one of your two favourites, let me know during lunch.
  - ❖ We may be able to squeeze you into an interview this afternoon on this 3rd project.
  - ❖ Failing that, you can use Doodle Polls at the end of the indico agenda to book in for ZOOM interviews on this project in days following open day.

## Schedule of chats (remote students)

- ❖ One student already invited to interviews this afternoon via ZOOM.
- ❖ Others already invited to sign up for interviews only on specific projects, via Doodle Polls on indico, and have interviews in days following Open Day via ZOOM.

# After the Open Day & Chats

- ❖ All students update the list of all the PhD projects for which they wish to be considered, in decreasing order of preference in the **survey** that is linked from indico.
  - e.g. 3, 6, 2, 1, 5, 4.
- ❖ The supervisors of each project indicate which students they prefer.
- ❖ We assign of students to individual projects.
  - Student submits formal application to partner university (if not already done).
  - Supervisors may invite student to longer interview (perhaps as part of university interviews)
  - Successful students will receive an offer from one (and only one) RAL/PPD PhD project.
- ❖ Students claim their travel expenses by submitting this [form](#) to [PAPPDDIRECTOR@stfc.ac.uk](mailto:PAPPDDIRECTOR@stfc.ac.uk) , together with a single photo of all their receipts.