

OLDJOE

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM'S
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Spring 2014



Special edition:

WE ARE UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

A merry dance:
Robert Parker

You are amazing

Reflections: Kitty
Hart-Moxon OBE

Changing the FACE
of forest research

The first word



In case you hadn't heard, we are *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* University of the Year 2013–14. After being shortlisted in 2012, I must confess to hoping this would be our year. So why did we win?

Firstly, our overall quality, building on our status as an institution of excellence for more than a century. Secondly, we are innovative. Our unconditional offer strategy brought even more

outstanding students to Birmingham. We made bold steps in the international arena, and launched innovations such as the Rolls-Royce High Temperature Research Centre and our University Training School (UTS).

Thirdly, we made strides in every metric being measured – from student recruitment and admissions, to winning circa £100 million in capital awards to support our teaching and infrastructure. The University now sits comfortably in the top 20 of all the national league tables; we maintained our overall satisfaction score of 88% in the National Student Survey; and 93% of our graduates are in work or further study six months after graduating. These, and of course our momentous *Circles of Influence* fundraising campaign, are the collective achievements of everyone in the University community, including our alumni, and I take great pride in that.

This does not mean we will become complacent. Our campus investment includes UTS, the new Dental Hospital, a new sports centre and library, the Institute for Forest Research, and new student accommodation. We are developing new ways of delivering teaching and training; including blended and distance learning, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs); while an increased focus on postgraduate recruitment will better reflect our exceptional research standing.

We are not a boutique university. There is not one single thing that makes us good: it is the sum of our parts. We are getting better at knowing what we are good at; and at knowing what good is. I would like to congratulate you all on winning University of the Year, and thank you for the part you continue to play in our success, which I hope you will share with your family and friends.

Best wishes,

Professor David Eastwood
Vice-Chancellor and donor to the University

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GUEST EDITOR

It is a great time to be an alumnus of Birmingham. Not only has the University soared in all of the major league tables (page 26) but it has now received the much-deserved accolade University of the Year (page 24). Finally, the world knows what many of us have been saying since we first set foot on campus: the University of Birmingham is the best!

This issue of *Old Joe* will reinforce that belief. You will read about new campus developments, life-changing research and fantastic events, such as the Book to the Future festival. I was fascinated to read that some of the funds raised by the *Circles of Influence* campaign have been invested in dinosaurs (page 36), robots (page 43) and saving the world's forests (page 28).

The video of Pete the Beaker is a particular highlight (page 35). He fights off cancer cells by using Old Joe as a baseball bat!

I often lament that I miss my university days but, as alumni, we remain part of the University and our involvement never has to end.

So please read, enjoy and stay in touch.

Simon Fairbanks (BA English, 2007; MA English Literature 2010)
Recruitment Officer for the University of Warwick

Be a guest editor

Let us know if you would like to be a guest editor via alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

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as Apollo, photographed
by Bill Cooper



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Read Old Joe online

Your alumni magazine is also available as an online edition, with additional and interactive content. Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/news/old-joe/index.aspx

Have you looked over *The Edge*?

Are you looking for careers advice, opportunities or work-related inspiration? Look no further than your new alumni careers e-newsletter, *The Edge*.

Packed with expert tips, case studies, job vacancies and careers news from the University and beyond, *The Edge* is useful whether you are a recent graduate, have enjoyed a lengthy career or are somewhere in between.

If you haven't received *The Edge*, please contact alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

YOUR YEAR IN PICTURES



Image: Sean Smith © Blink Films

1 TOMB RAIDER: Egyptologist Dr Chris Naunton (BA Ancient History and Archeology, 1999; MPhil Egyptology, 2001) unearths the secrets of Tutankhamun in his film *Mystery of the Burnt Mummy*, aired on Channel 4 in November 2013. The film is greeted with interest from around the world.

2 MARTIAL ARTIST: Despite only taking up the sport in 2007 while studying, Katherine Paes (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2008) is named 2012 Irish National Champion in Taekwondo and now has aims of competing at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Good luck, Katherine!

3 STEPPING BACK IN TIME: Proud alumni Richard (BEng & Man Mechanical Engineering, Manufacture and Management, 1984) and Mandy Wantock (née Rees; BA Theology, 1983) feel a strong sense of déjà vu as they celebrate the graduation of their son, Tom (MSc Physics and Astronomy, 2013) at a sunny summer ceremony.

4 MANY STRINGS TO HER BOW: Amy Cunningham (BMus Music, 2006) and her organisation The Strings Club, which provides instrumental courses for children aged 4–12, are awarded the Nectar Business Start Up of the Year 2013, presented by businesswoman and *The Apprentice* star, Karren Brady CBE (DUniv, 2010).

5 SECOND TO NON: Non Stanford (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2010) becomes ITU Triathlon World Champion at London's Hyde Park, September 2013, making her the first woman to win the under-23 and senior world titles in successive seasons.

6 ONE DECADE ON: International charity InterVol celebrates its ten-year anniversary in 2014 having originally been founded as a volunteering project at the Guild of Students. InterVol has so far sent 500 volunteers overseas and raised around £150,000 for its partners in Bulgaria, Ecuador, Kenya, Nepal and Uganda.



B15 FACES



What did you want to be when you grew up? What are you now?

15 alumni share their childhood ambition and what they have actually become. I wanted to...



'...be a vet; now I'm an academic.'
Keith Pugh (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2010)



'...be a rock star; I now work in the sports business industry.'
Tim Smith (BSc Geography, 2011)



'...be a painter; am now an engineer.'
Wan Yin Yee (BEng Chemical Engineering, 2008)



'...be a tractor driver; I now work in IT services.'
Pete Aston (BSc Geology and Geography, 1999)



'...be an astronaut; I am now a fundraiser.'
Carys Lewis (BA History, 2013)



'...be an astronaut; now I am a serious games designer.'
Chris Hart (BEng Mechanical Engineering, 1997)



'...be an actress; now I am a Secondary School English Teacher.'
Paloma Hinojosa (English BA, 2013)



'...be a pilot and now I develop energy technologies.'
Jeremy Woolley (BSc Physics and Astrophysics, 2010)



'...be a police officer; now I work in digital marketing.'
Jennifer Morrison (BSc Business Management, 2011)



'...be an engineer; am now an academic.'
Kok-Soo Teoh (BSc Mechanical Engineering, 1984; PhD, 1988)



'...teach Shakespeare; I'm now an Executive Assistant.'
Sara Addison-Meyr (PGDip Shakespeare Studies, 1994)



'...work in sport and did at London 2012; now busy promoting East Devon.'
Carol Austin (BCom Social Sciences, 1983)



'...be a medic; now I work for a recruitment company.'
Chris Horsley (BSc Maths with Business Management, 2010)



'...be a journalist. I was a journo for ten years, and ghost-write books.'
Emma Donnan (BA English and American Studies, 2001)



'...be a programmer; I now work for the BBC.'
Alastair Ford (BSc Computer Science and Software Engineering, 1994)



GUEST EDITOR

I wanted to write books.
I still write fiction and am self-publishing my first book soon.



DO YOU WANT TO BE A B15 FACE?

What one thing would you take to a desert island?
Tweet your answer and a photo to @birminghamalum and the best will appear in the next issue of *Old Joe*.





GUEST ED LOVES



FESTIVAL BOOKS ITS NAME AS A HOT TICKET

Talent shines through in a celebration of words encompassing fact, fiction, poetry, journalism and even Scrabble.

● **Image:** Actor, television presenter and history enthusiast Sir Tony Robinson takes centre stage

What brings together everything from poetry to publishing, comic books to crime-writing, and the Battle of Bosworth to the *Book of the Dead*? Book to the Future, the University's first festival celebrating the written and spoken word, held last autumn by the College of Arts and Law (CAL).

The six-day event showcased the talents of academics, students, staff and alumni as well as welcoming well-known poets, authors and journalists onto campus. Actor, television presenter and history enthusiast Sir Tony Robinson entertained an audience of more than 400 children in the Elgar Concert Hall; while the Creative Minds series (bringing distinguished writers and artists to the University) launched with poet Jamie McKendrick performing several of his works. Fantasy fiction hero Robin Hobb, award-winning author Professor David Lodge (PhD, 1967; HonDLitt, 2001), and Creative Writing Lecturer and author Dr Richard House were among the other experts sharing their knowledge.

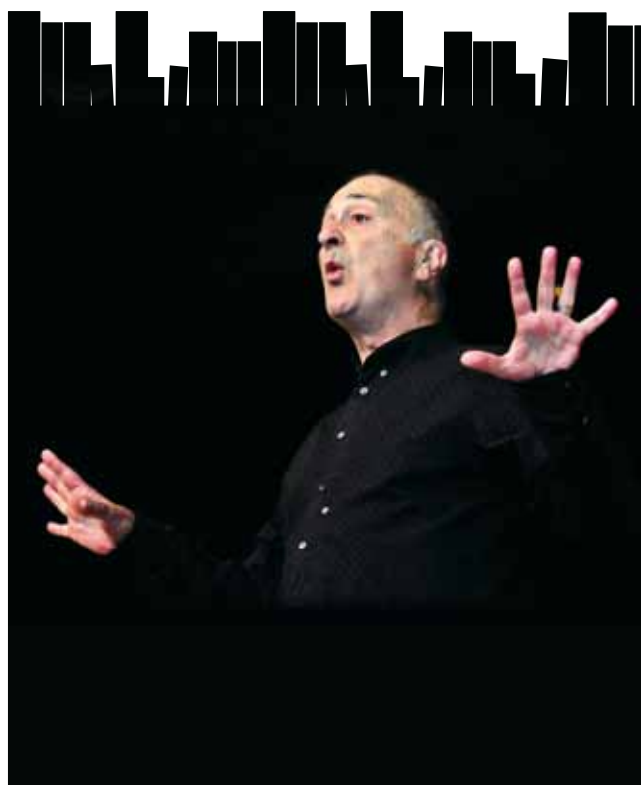
The festival also offered plenty of opportunities to get involved, including the first UK-wide university poetry slam – UniSlam! – featuring students from nine universities from Edinburgh (the eventual winners) to Cambridge.

'We set out to show the wealth of creative talent being

nurtured in the shadow of Old Joe and it became a very successful and thoroughly enjoyable festival,' says Charlotte Heap, Alumni Relations Manager for CAL. 'More than 1,700 people explored campus, and we held 43 events, four exhibitions, one world record attempt and even a social Scrabble afternoon. It wouldn't have happened without alumni getting involved and the support of the Alumni Impact Fund so I would like to thank everyone who played their part.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Helping to keep the joy of words alive for future generations of students, more than 1,100 alumni gave £3 towards a new library on campus. Each £3 gift was topped up to £100 by former Chancellor Sir Dominic Cadbury's Challenge Fund, raising more than £83,000. Thank you to everyone who made a gift.



OLDJOE NEWS

A digital taste of higher education

Learners across the world can now access Birmingham expertise from anywhere with an internet connection.

Delivered in partnership with the Open University's FutureLearn initiative, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offer access to free, high-quality academic content via the worldwide web.

The first five courses available cover subjects ranging from *Hamlet* to airborne conflict in the First World War, brain behaviour and dental photography. Details of more courses will be released later this year.

Professor John Heath, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Estates and Infrastructure, says: 'These new free, online courses will enable increased access to higher education and offer a taste of the inspirational Birmingham experience for a whole new community of learners worldwide. We hope alumni will reconnect with Birmingham by completing one or more MOOCs themselves and recommending the courses to friends.'

Almost 19,000 learners have signed up for MOOCs so far. For further details about enrolling, please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/moocs

Which subject would you like to study with a MOOC?

Let us know by emailing alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Nine (and a half) degrees of Birmingham



The last issue of *Old Joe* featured three generations of Birmingham alumni from the same family, and asked you to share your family history at the University.



Pete Aston (BSc Geography and Geology, 1999) got in touch to say that an amazing nine members of his family are UoB graduates including:

→ **Pete's parents:** Brian Aston (BDS Dentistry, 1968) and Pamela Aston (née Brook) (BDS Dentistry, 1969), who met on the first day in High and Ridge and later married

→ **Pete's aunt and uncle:** Elizabeth King (née Brook) (BDS Dentistry, 1976) and Roger King (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1973) also met at Birmingham and later married

→ **Pete's brother and sister-in-law:** Philip Aston (BSc Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, 1995) and Sara Grierson (BA History, 1994; PGCE Education, 1997) met here and later married

→ **Pete's cousin once removed and his wife:** William Brook (BSc Physics, 1983) and Angela Brook (née Groark) (Mathematics) also met at Birmingham and later married

Pete now works at the University and his 19-month-old son Marin (seen above) is even at nursery here, making a grand total of nine and a half Birmingham connections for the Aston family. Is that a record or could your family beat it?

Get in touch via alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

CHINESE RAIL PARTNERSHIP IS ON TRACK

A new rail research institute in the Anhui province marks a major milestone in the University's burgeoning relationship with China and its hopes for future research capability in the region.

The Anhui-Birmingham International Research Institute in Rail Transportation (ABIRIRT) will bring together Anglo-Chinese expertise, with initial research focusing on metro developments in the province.

Clive Roberts, Director of ABIRIRT

and Professor of Railway Systems, says: 'Working in China gives us the opportunity to support and influence railway development in a country with 10,000km of high-speed line, and with 25 cities that are building or extending their metro services.'

'As the Institute grows and develops its significant research capabilities, it will act as a base for our railway research across Asia and reinforce our growing portfolio of activities in China.'



● Image: Prostate cancer researcher Dr Richard Viney

BUYING TIME FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Twenty men with advanced prostate cancer have been given the chance of a longer life thanks to money donated by more than 2,400 alumni and friends.

Your gifts fully funded the clinical trial of a unique and pioneering treatment combining an immunotherapy injection and High Intensity Frequency Ultrasound (a heated probe to destroy the tumour), offering patients with no other hope the possibility of extending their life by up to six months.

'Astounded is the only word I can think of that describes the response to our fundraising appeal,' says Dr Richard Viney (MBChB Medicine, 1995),

Senior Lecturer at the University and Consultant Surgeon at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. 'I never expected we would raise the £237,000 to fully fund the trial and would like to sincerely thank everyone who gave.'

If the initial trials are successful, Dr Viney hopes to work on applying this treatment at earlier stages of the disease, and extend the research to assess whether using cold treatment (cryotherapy) combined with immunotherapy will have even better results for survival and cure.

Learn more or make a gift
www.birmingham.ac.uk/wesavelives

NEWS IN BRIEF

Old Joe in the Big Apple

Here is New York-based alumna Veronica Bainbridge (BA History, 1997; MPhil English, 2000) enjoying the last edition of *Old Joe* in the city's iconic Times Square. Send a photo of yourself with *Old Joe* to alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk to be featured in September's magazine.



Discovery of world's oldest calendar

British archaeology experts discovered what they believe is the world's oldest 'calendar', dating back to 8000 BC. Analysis by a team led by Birmingham shed new light on the luni-solar device, which pre-dates the first formal time-measuring devices by nearly 5,000 years.



● Image: (l-r) Professor Richard Williams, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences; Mr Zhang Tianpei, Deputy Director-General of Anhui Development and Reform Commission

International Development celebrates golden anniversary

IDD International Development Department
50th Anniversary 1964–2014

It's 50 years since the International Development Department (IDD) opened its doors and, to mark the occasion, the Department is celebrating with

DID YOU KNOW?

IDD runs a joint postgraduate programme with the Department of African Studies and Anthropology (DASA), including an MA in Africa and Development and PhDs. Search for DASA at www.birmingham.ac.uk to learn more.

a series of events and seminars.

The anniversary activities started with IDD hosting the Development Studies Association Conference, which attracted a large number of global delegates. A special anniversary report will also be available online from Easter.

The Department focuses on issues such as poverty reduction, climate change, effective governance, democratisation, political reform and conflict in developing and transitional countries.

Professor Paul Jackson, outgoing

Head of IDD, says: 'We've changed a lot over 50 years, becoming far more international in our outlook.

'We've also moved from being a very policy-driven department, to an academic one that understands the importance of policy. What definitely hasn't changed is that we – staff, students and alumni – all still want to change the world!'

Learn more

www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/international-development/index.aspx

Work begins on landmark dental hospital

Building work has begun on a new University dental hospital and dental school at the former BBC Pebble Mill Studios site in Edgbaston.

Housing a range of services for the public plus facilities for the School's 600 students, the £34 million, four-storey development is set to open in autumn 2015.

Professor Philip Lumley, Head of the School of Dentistry, says: 'We are thrilled

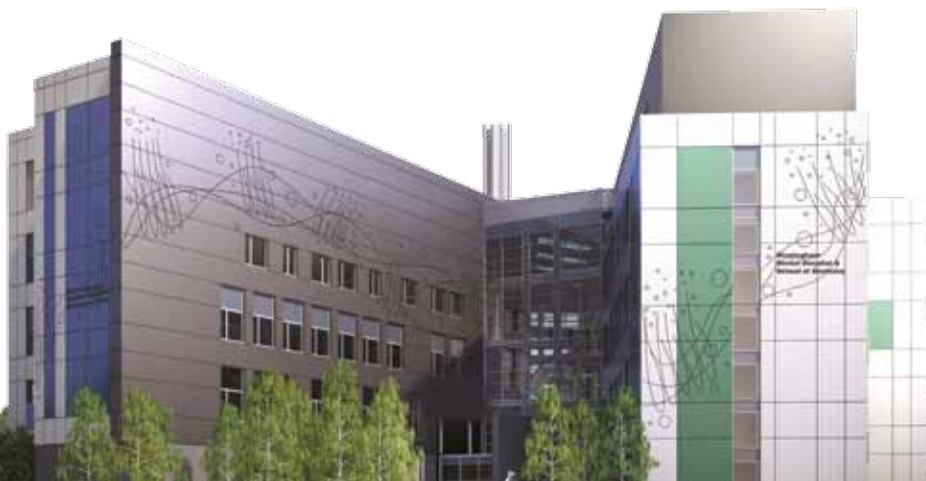
that this landmark project is finally under way. This development is highly strategic for the city of Birmingham, being a key element of the new Edgbaston Medical Quarter, and will further enhance the city's reputation as a hub of medicine, learning and life sciences.'

Learn more

www.dentistry.bham.ac.uk



- **Image above:** (l-r) Patrick Stewart, Birmingham University Dental Students' Society (BUDSS) President; Sarah Franks, former BUDSS President; Philip Lumley, Head of the School of Dentistry; Lynne Reynolds, School Administration Manager, at the turf cutting ceremony for the new dental school and hospital
- **Artist's impression:** (left) The new dental hospital and dental school





MY FAVOURITE BOOKS

English lecturer Dr Richard House, whose digitally enhanced novel *The Kills* was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, reveals his five favourite books.



Libra

Don DeLillo

First, foremost, has to come Don DeLillo: this book is like honey (if you want something with more heft, go with *Underworld*). It's 50 years since Kennedy's assassination, and here is a novel which plays intelligently with the paranoia and the grief.



We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live

Joan Didion

Joan Didion should be required reading for all. In here is a startling frankness and honesty, the title alone sets the tone of this work. This is masterful: how can language be used with such forensic precision, and still have the ability to blow a hole in your heart?



No Lease on Life

Lynne Tillman

Lynne Tillman is one of the world's best kept writing secrets. *No Lease on Life* toys with Joyce's conceit for *Ulysses* (one man, one day, one city) and happens the next calendar day. Her character, Elizabeth, negotiates one full day in New York with love and frustration, every visitor to the city should be handed this novel on entry. Nothing much actually happens, although you won't notice that.



2666

Roberto Bolano

Bolano offers a compact history of loss, which starts with a group of academics misbehaving, falling in and out of love with each other and their subject. It's masterful, daunting, and riddled with violence (watch out).



GUEST ED LOVES

DID YOU KNOW?

The oldest student society at Birmingham is Carnival RAG whose predecessor, Birmingham University Hospital Carnival, started in 1921.



The Danzig Trilogy

Gunter Grass

Gunter Grass's *Danzig Trilogy* includes *The Tin Drum*, but really, like Bolano, these novels are a single project which maps personal and political histories.

Legacy transforms learning

Students and staff in the Department of Anatomy are benefiting from a legacy left by a friend of the University in his will.

Kenneth Foster left the majority of his wealth to the Department, enabling staff to buy two virtual dissection tables and refurbish a dedicated teaching and research room in the Medical School.

The touch-screen tables provide life-size, 360-degree rotatable images of the human body that can be dissected as many times as necessary.

'The virtual dissection tables that Kenneth's gift has provided mean that generations of students can really get to grips with a complicated, but fundamental, area of learning,' explains Emma Hazlewood, Legacy Officer. 'Kenneth has helped to revolutionise the way we teach anatomy and we are extremely grateful for his legacy.'

If you would like to leave a legacy to Birmingham in your will, please contact Emma on +44 (0)121 414 7957 or e.j.hazlewood@bham.ac.uk.

'I'M A BIG FAN OF THESE FIVE WRITERS. THEIR STYLES ARE DISTINCTIVE, SEDUCTIVE, COMMANDING, AND IN WRITING ABOUT THE WORLD THEY SHOW HUMOUR AND HORROR, AND, BEST OF ALL, HUMANITY.'

For your chance to win Richard's top five books, answer the following question: **In which city is the plot for *The Kills* based?** Email your answer by 31 May 2014 to alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

WIN



● **Image:** Building work on the new library (artist's impression pictured) will begin soon

On track to reach campaign target

With just £30 million to go until the £160 million target, the University is urging alumni and friends to do something amazing by supporting its *Circles of Influence* fundraising campaign.

Work has started on several building projects to take the historic Edgbaston campus into the 21st century and with a final push we can ensure these are completed to the same exceptional standard as the Bramall Music Building.

With your help, the University can reinvigorate the Lapworth Museum (see page 36) and construct a fully equipped sports centre for use by students, athletes and the community

(see page 34). We can provide a library fit for the digital age that serves modern students' needs and use our experience in raising young people's aspirations to build the country's first University Training School (see page 34).

Former University Chancellor Sir Dominic Cadbury explains: 'Philanthropy can make the difference between simply a good project and an extraordinary project. Your gifts are hugely important and will transform what we are able to do for campus developments and numerous other initiatives.'

Learn more www.birmingham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence

STOP PRESS

Building work has now started on the new sports centre and work on the other campus projects is set to begin very soon.

Uniting students past and present

Alumni support students in a whole range of ways; from sharing advice and contacts, to mentoring and financial gifts to schemes like Access to Birmingham (A2B) and internships.

Now the University is hoping to use the shared connection of groups, societies and sports clubs to bring together students past and present. The aim of the new programme is to improve understanding of what particular help students want from alumni, and raise awareness about the value of staying in touch with Birmingham after graduation.

Hannah Lane (BA International

Relations, 2013), Vice President PolSoc 2012–13, says: 'The Politics Society (PolSoc) wanted to host a careers advice evening with politics alumni. Influential alumni from a range of careers came, helping our members make connections and seek professional advice.'

Alumni who get involved also enjoy the experience. 'I loved coming back to Birmingham for the tenth birthday of WatchThis,' says Laura Fairbanks (BA Drama and English, 2008), WatchThis Society Secretary, 2007–8. 'It was great to meet current students and we even played some drama games!'



TAKING ON A CHALLENGE

An example of the *Circles of Influence* campaign in action is our Chancellor's Challenge Fund appeal.

Sir Dominic Cadbury, who retired as Chancellor in December 2013, is challenging alumni, friends and supporters to raise a combined £2 million for campus developments by July 2014.

In autumn 2013, the first 800 donors who responded to a letter from Sir Dominic saw their £3 gifts topped up to £100 by the Chancellor himself. This appeal raised more than £83,000 for the new library and donations are still coming in.

If you would like to support the appeal, why not bake and sell cakes, run a sponsored half-marathon or make a gift today using the form included with this edition of *Old Joe*.

Watch Sir Dominic speak about the Chancellor's Challenge Fund by scanning the QR code above or at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvFZO8g8D2Y

Want to get involved?

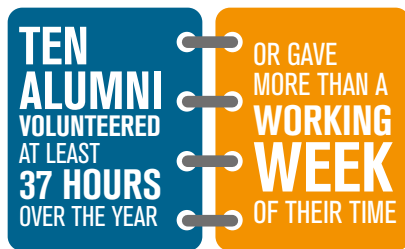
Which societies were you part of while you were at Birmingham? Could you provide advice, attend an event, share memories or otherwise support a student society? Contact the University via +44 (0)121 414 4001 or alumni-volunteers@contacts.bham.ac.uk

ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS MAKE AN IMPACT



GUEST ED LOVES

From mentoring students to establishing new groups for Birmingham graduates, alumni volunteers have made a real difference to the University over the past year. Here are just some of the ways you have helped.



720
ALUMNI GAVE
THEIR TIME IN
2012-13



TWO HOURS:

THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT TOOK TO FIND
AN ITALIAN SPEAKER TO PLAY SHAKESPEARE...

AND READ THE INTRODUCTION IN HIS
NATIVE LANGUAGE FOR THE...

EYE SHAKESPEARE APP

A GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE'S STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



1949-2013
ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS
INCLUDE GRADUATES
FROM MORE THAN 60 YEARS AGO
RIGHT UP TO THE PRESENT DAY

SIX NEW ALUMNI GROUPS IN
CHINA AND THE US

WHICH ARE BOTH KEY STRATEGIC COUNTRIES FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Kitty Hart-Moxon OBE

Holocaust survivor and honorary graduate (Hon DUniv, 2013)

My childhood was wonderful until the summer holidays of 1939 when the invasion started. I was 12. We fled to a town called Lublin and there they were rounding people up, taking them out of town and killing them. We tried different escapes but you always had to get back to the ghetto at night to register because Jews weren't allowed to move around.

I was sentenced to death aged 16. My mother and I had already been parted from my father and brother, and a priest had got us non-Jewish identities so we were taken to work in a German factory. But we were betrayed, taken to Gestapo headquarters, interrogated and sentenced to death. We lined up facing a wall, but the death squads shot into the air and our sentence became life imprisonment at Auschwitz.

On 2 April 1943, I arrived at Auschwitz. I was there for almost two years, which was exceptional because the average lifespan of an inmate was between three weeks and three months. It was dangerous for your face to be known to the privileged prisoners. To stay alive, it was important to be invisible.

I felt like giving up many times. I was working in the sick bay for some time and managed to hide some of my friends there as they recovered. Every day the SS doctor came in to make a selection for the gas chamber. He would mark the bed with a cross and you were dead. One day he said: 'We're emptying the whole block', more than 1,000 women. I had to help load my friends onto lorries. We all knew they were going to die.

Working near the gas chambers, I knew I was doomed because of what I witnessed, day in and day out. We were told: 'The only way out is through the chimney.'

We hoped conditions would improve after being evacuated from Auschwitz, but things were actually worse during the last six months of the war. My mother and I were forced on a death march over the mountains, barefoot in deep snow. Then we were loaded onto open coal trucks and taken on a seven-day journey without food or water. Our destination was a cave where we had to work 11 shafts underground. Soon again we were evacuated. This time we were pushed into airtight container trucks and took turns to breathe through gaps in the floor. We heard footsteps and banged against the doors. One truck was opened by soldiers and when we fell out, my mother said: 'We're not going back, you can kill us now. We demand to be taken to a camp.' Out of 100 women, just 12 of us had not suffocated.

Nobody wanted to hear when I first came to England. As my uncle drove me and my mother from the docks he said: 'Remember, in my house I don't want you to speak about anything that happened to you. I don't want to know and I don't want my girls upset.' I was very angry at the indifference, the hostility, and the lack of understanding. It took 15 years for anyone to ask me the first question.

I felt a duty to document my experiences not only because of what happened to me, but what I witnessed. People must be warned of the consequences of discrimination.

Auschwitz was my university because you learnt everything about life. You saw the worst of human nature but also saw the best. Friendships and mutual support were vital, you couldn't survive on your own and you often risked your life for friends. Auschwitz taught you to cope with everything life would throw at you because it could never be as bad as that.

6 **AUSCHWITZ WAS
MY UNIVERSITY
BECAUSE YOU
LEARNT
EVERYTHING
ABOUT LIFE.
YOU SAW THE
WORST OF
HUMAN NATURE
BUT ALSO SAW
THE BEST.**

WIN

Return to Auschwitz by Kitty Hart-Moxon and the DVD of the same name are available from the Holocaust Educational Trust for £10 for both.

Visit www.het.org.uk/index.php/contact-general or call +44 (0)20 7222 6822. To be entered into a prize draw to win the book and DVD set, email your name and degree details to alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk by 31 May 2014.





GUEST ED LOVES

Take three: Social media



DISLIKE

FRIEND OR FOE – IS SOCIAL MEDIA
GOOD FOR SOCIETY OR A BAD
INFLUENCE? A FORUM FOR SHARING
OWNED BY ITS USERS OR A HAVEN
FOR BULLYING AND BAD BEHAVIOUR?

JOINING THE DEBATE

Academics from the University
are sharing their expertise
and knowledge on a diverse
range of subjects and applying
it to global news stories via
www.theconversation.com/uk

OLD JOE ASKS THREE ACADEMICS TO LEND THEIR
VOICES TO A VERY MODERN DEBATE.



LIKE

1

'Social media is good for society. When Twitter launched, people said: "What can you say in 140 characters?"

but look at it now – it raises awareness of humanitarian causes and generates mass support.

'Social media connects people to what's happening around the world, but more than that, it connects them with people who they may not access in any other way. And that connection can humanise those people. For example, someone in the UK can connect with someone in Iran and realise that although they may live thousands of miles apart, they have common concerns; such as good healthcare and a decent education.

'Different societies use social media in different ways.

**'IT WILL
BECOME ANOTHER
TOOL IN OUR ARSENAL
TO FIND OUT ABOUT
AND ENGAGE WITH
WHAT'S GOING ON IN
THE WORLD.'**

In China, it exists under heavy surveillance, but is still used to cover a huge range of topics, while in Iran, Twitter is an often-used tool for mass protests.

'Social media will continue to develop globally. It will become quicker and more dynamic to enable more conversation, but the paradox will be that those conversations will become more specific – it will become another tool in our arsenal to find

out about and engage with what's going on in the world.'

**Professor Scott Lucas
specialises in US/UK foreign
policy and international
current affairs**



2

'One of the issues is that the norms of behaviour are still evolving. It's not yet clear what is and isn't

appropriate, and in order to tackle this problem, we all need to have a better understanding of social media, which will equip us to deal with issues like cyber bullying, stolen identities and the addictive effects of social media – we know people are waking up to check for text messages and status updates in the middle of the night. Social media is an extremely powerful, positive way of connecting people, but people shouldn't use it as a way to validate themselves.

'One of the advantages social media has is that it gives individuals the power to decide how they want to present themselves – they can choose to show only the positive

'SOCIAL MEDIA IS AN EXTREMELY POWERFUL, POSITIVE WAY OF CONNECTING PEOPLE, BUT PEOPLE SHOULDN'T USE IT AS A WAY TO VALIDATE THEMSELVES.'

parts of their lives and personalities.

Unfortunately, the downside is that there are men pretending to be teenagers in order to engage with youngsters.

'Another negative aspect is one where bullying, abuse and obnoxious behaviour occur. In some sense, social media magnifies people's attitudes and, because they don't see the impact that their actions have on their

"victims", it's

easier to go further and further.'

Professor Russell Beale is a Professor of Human-Computer Interaction in the School of Computer Science



3

'We are in the early stages of understanding the significance of social media as a venue for expressing views.

'Social media can be an indication of the effectiveness of democracy within a society – we're starting to see governments being swayed by large numbers of people uniting to use social media to protest, the Arab Spring being a case in point. It has the potential to empower the ordinary person to hold politicians to account.

'I started an online petition to the Albanian government in 2013, asking it to build a road in Dibra that would improve the region's economy and infrastructure. Successive opposition parties have supported the road, only to drop the plans when they came to power. I now have thousands of names on my

'WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO CHANNEL SOCIAL MEDIA SO THAT WE CAN POSITIVELY APPLY IT TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES.'

petition and the government is starting to pay attention. We need to learn how to channel social media so that we can positively apply it to democratic processes.

'We've seen how effectively politicians like Barack Obama can use social media. However, elsewhere, politicians are using it as an alternative to meeting with the electorate face to face. This is creating a politics of popularity, where success is gauged by the

number of "likes" or followers they have.'

Dr Gëzim Alpijon specialises in the sociology of success, religion, race, ethnicity, film, media and authorship



SPOTLIGHT:

Chicago

Visit www.uob-usa-alumni.org to find out about alumni groups and activity in Chicago and across the US



Standing proud in America's Midwest, Chicago is one of the US's predominant financial, cultural and sporting centres. Find out why University staff and alumni love America's 'Second City'...

Chicago summons many images; the razzle-dazzle of the 1920s, the exploits of Al Capone, its shining glass and steel skyline. Called the 'pulse of America', Chicago is certainly an exciting city.

Founded in the 1800s with a double-digit population, by 1860 the city was a thriving industrial hub that enticed new inhabitants in their thousands. Today, it's home to 9.5 million people and some of the world's finest arts, architecture and cuisine.

It's more than 20 years since Birmingham twinned with Chicago and the University has developed numerous strategic links with the Windy City, including partnerships with its three universities and several cultural institutions, plus initiatives such as teaching collaborations, student exchanges and internships.

Have you been to...

Rio? Send your tips and pictures to alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk and the best will be featured on this page in the next issue of *Old Joe*.

So what do staff and alumni recommend when visiting Chicago?

Danielle's tips:

- Read Erik Larson's *The Devil in the White City* before you go
- Visit the Art Institute of Chicago and gaze (in the manner of Ferris Bueller's Day Off) at Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*
- Learn about the architecture of Chicago on a boat cruise of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan
- Visit the Chicago Historical Society
- Take in a comedy show at Second City
- Take your photo at Cloud Gate, the Anish Kapoor sculpture in Millennium Park
- Eat deep-dish pizza and Chicago-style hot dogs



Danielle Albracht, Senior Alumni Relations Officer, hails from Illinois.

Roger's tips:

- Wildfire Restaurant is a must for steak and fish dishes
- Go on the Gangster Tour
- Enjoy the entertainments and attractions of Navy Pier
- Go to the Blue Chicago Grill Restaurant for authentic blues music
- Visit the Sears and Hancock Buildings for great views of the city
- If you like sport, catch a game of one of these Chicago teams – the Bears (NFL), the Cubs and White Sox (baseball), the Bulls (basketball), the Blackhawks and Wolves (ice hockey), or Fire (soccer)
- Shop on The Magnificent Mile, AKA Michigan Avenue

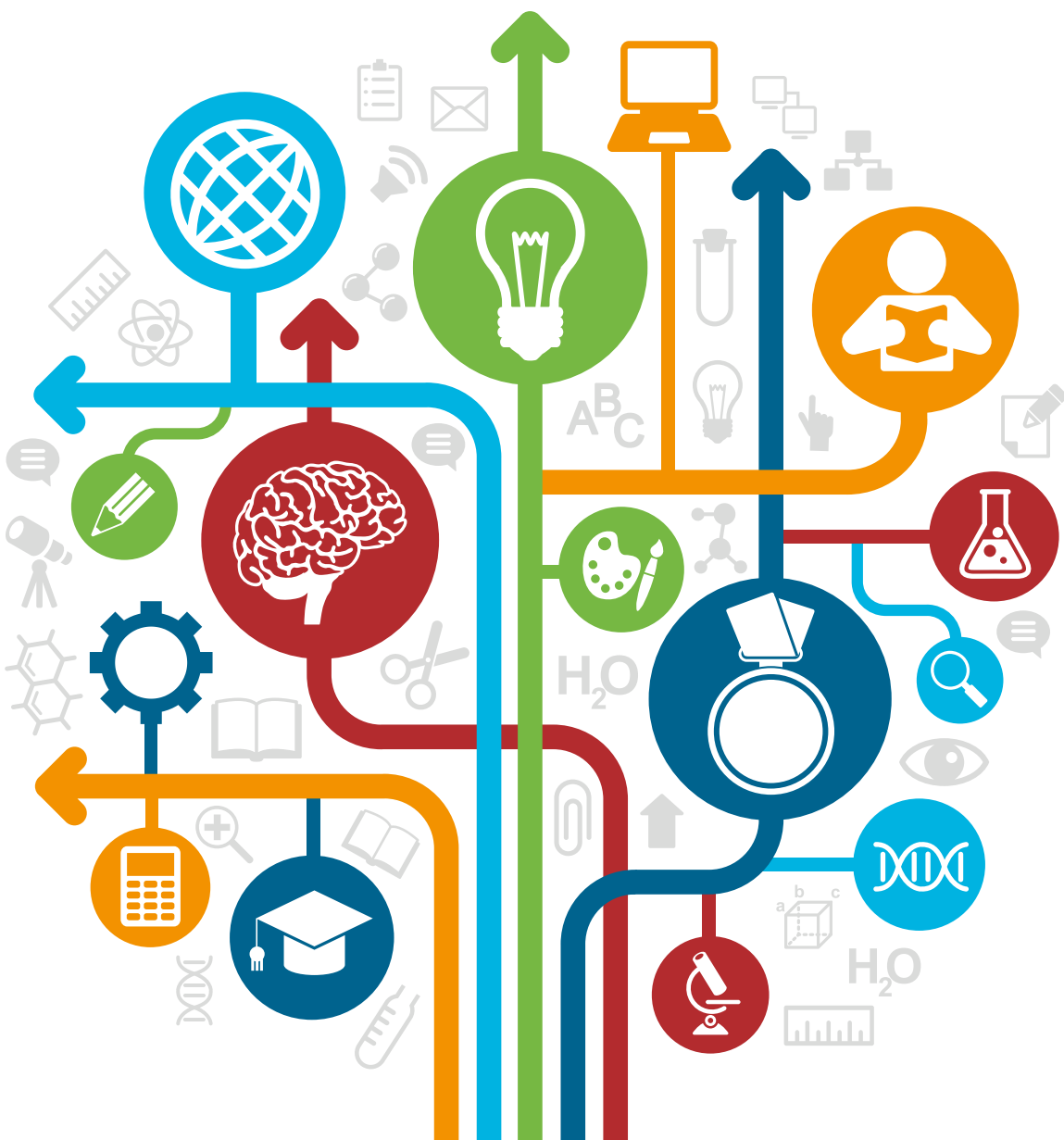


Roger Clunn (MBA Strategic and Procurement Management, 1999) worked in Chicago.



YOU ARE AMAZING

THROUGH SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS, SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES,
CREATIVITY AND DETERMINATION, OUR ALUMNI HAVE
PERFORMED SOME TRULY REMARKABLE FEATS.





Sir Paul Nurse

BSc Biology, 1970; HonDSc, 1998

The eminent geneticist Sir Paul Nurse was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for his cell cycle discoveries. His work has led to the development of life-saving cancer treatments and medicines.

FACT: At the age of 57, Sir Paul discovered that the woman he thought was his sister was in fact his mother when applying for his US Green Card.



Pam Relph MBE

BSc Physics, 2011

Despite only taking up rowing in 2010, Pam has won a string of international medals including gold at the London 2012 Paralympic Games in the mixed coxed four event.

FACT: Pam captained the University's cheerleading squad, the Birmingham Pussycats.



John Tedstrom

PhD Russian and East European Studies, 1994

As the former CEO of the Global Business Coalition for Health, John encouraged private-sector companies to invest their resources to combat diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

FACT: John has launched a new business helping companies strengthen their diversity policies to advance human rights and build stronger communities around the world.



Justice Michelle Arana

LLM in Commercial Law, 2004

Justice Arana was appointed the first female Justice of the Supreme Court of Belize in 2006. Previously, she was Registrar General and Registrar of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal of Belize since 1998.

FACT: Justice Arana has served on Belize's National Women's Commission.



Michael Acton Smith OBE

BSc Geography, 1996; DUniv, 1996

Michael is the creator of Moshi Monsters, an online world of animated characters that boasts more than 50 million users.

FACT: Michael received an OBE in the 2014 New Year Honours. For a full list of alumni awarded Queen's Honours in 2013–14, see the September edition of *Old Joe*.

Nominate your top ten

Can you help us to celebrate the impact that staff, students, and alumni have had on society?

With eight Nobel Prize winners among former staff and students and world-leading research on everything from the Big Bang to Shakespeare, Birmingham research continues to transform lives.

The University needs your nominations for a new 'top ten' list of the alumni, staff, and students who have had profound impact through their research. Visit www.Birmingham.ac.uk/10ways to cast your vote – you can even nominate yourself! We'll reveal the final list in your next edition of *Old Joe*.

LIBERATION, AVIATION^{AND} EDUCATION

Live, dance, learn is the motto of Elmhurst School for Dance and it's an ethos the school's Artistic Director Robert Parker has certainly lived by.

DID YOU KNOW?

The partners of the groundbreaking National Institute of Dance, Medicine and Science (NIDMS) established the UK's second NHS specialist dance injury clinic in Birmingham in November 2013.





Taking flight to Florida to train to become a commercial pilot was not an easy decision for Robert Parker, but little did he know having a year out from dancing would prove to be the best move he ever made.

Robert (MPhil Education, 2011) emigrated to the US with his family in 2008, aged 29. As a principal dancer with Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) he was approaching the end of his career. Years of arduous training and performing had taken their toll on his body and he was ready for a change.

At first the aviation training was exciting and Robert enjoyed doing something completely different, but he soon began to miss dancing.

'At principal dancer level you start to get rock star status. You get used to the adrenalin rush that performing gives you, being in the company of other dancers almost 24 hours a day and the exclusivity of the ballet world,' he says.

'Training as a pilot I felt like I'd unzipped myself and stepped into someone else's shoes.

'I think that year away was a year of reflection; you evaluate where your heart belongs and I discovered it was in dance.'

When the global recession hit, there was no longer a demand for pilots in the US and Robert made the final decision to return home. He called David Bintley, BRB's Director, who welcomed him back, and within a month Robert was dancing lead roles with renewed enthusiasm.

Although he trained at the Royal Ballet School, Robert had always regretted never studying for a degree. He discovered Dr Tansin Benn was running a two-year MPhil Applied Studies in Dance course created especially for BRB performers at the University, and jumped at the opportunity to enrol.

6 TRAINING AS
A PILOT I FELT
LIKE I'D UNZIPPED
MYSELF AND STEPPED
INTO SOMEONE
ELSE'S SHOES. 9

Robert's dissertation was about the identity issues male ballet dancers face after retirement, a transition that can be traumatic. 'To suddenly move from leading a very structured existence and being put on a pedestal to being anonymous can be a bitter pill to swallow. There have been cases of self-harm and drug abuse.'

Determined to plan his own life after retirement and pass on his skills, Robert began teaching part time at Elmhurst, Birmingham Royal Ballet's training school in Edgbaston. He decided he wanted to become a teacher after seeing a boy's face light up when he helped him execute a lift for the first time.

Robert retired in 2012 and joined Elmhurst full time as Artistic Director, responsible for the school's dance training for its 185 pupils.

'The training methods have evolved for the better and there's a strong emphasis on not just producing a dancer but producing a free thinking, autonomous human being,' he says.

'We make sure our dancers receive a good education and effective pastoral care.'

For Robert another abrupt career change is unlikely; he is firmly grounded, totally enthused about his role at Elmhurst and believes his postgraduate course helped prepare him for the role.

'Studying at Birmingham was such an enriching experience; it furthered my knowledge, boosted my confidence and having academic credentials has really supported me in my new career,' he adds.

'The school is moving in a really great direction and we want to be at the cutting edge of dance training. It's a phenomenal environment to work in and I'm looking forward to taking every opportunity to move the school forward.'

Learn more www.elmhurst.co.uk

Dance partners

Although the MPhil Applied Dance Studies course ended in 2011, the University and BRB have strong links and it is hoped it will be revived in the future. Projects on which the two organisations currently collaborate include cultural internships, outreach work and dance psychology. In 2009, the University helped sponsor BRB's tour of China. Several alumni, including Chinese principal dancer Lei Zhao (MA Applied Studies in Dance, 2003), performed in the touring productions.

WE ARE UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

We are delighted that Birmingham is *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* University of the Year 2013–14.
But why did we receive the title and what does it mean for our students, staff and alumni?





University of the Year: defined

Being named University of the Year by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* is the most prestigious accolade a UK university can achieve.

The Good University Guide, produced by the newspapers, provides students and their parents with an invaluable first reference point on the path to finding a university place and contains full profiles of all universities. The league table is drawn up from criteria including student satisfaction, research quality, graduate prospects, entrance qualifications held by new students, degree results achieved, student/staff ratios, service and facilities spend, and dropout rates.

An award has been given as part of the annual guide since 1999 but is not necessarily given to the university at the top of the league table. Instead, a university is chosen by a panel of experts based on all-round excellence.

Five members of the University community share their views:

The leader:

**Professor Adam Tickell,
Provost and Vice-Principal**

'Elated is the only word to describe my response when I heard Birmingham was named University of the Year. I believe our ability for enabling innovation and entrepreneurial ideas is one of the main reasons we were chosen.'

The undergraduate student:

**Edem Cleland-Awity
(First year, International Relations
with Economics)**

'I heard the news before I arrived here for my first year and I was very happy because it confirmed I'd made the right choice. I hope my time here will be unforgettable and intellectually stimulating.'

The postgraduate student:

**Becky Hair (Physiotherapy,
Pre-registration)**

'This is a brilliant accolade for the University that will certainly help with job applications. My experience here just confirms the University's quality; from lectures to placements, everything has been of a really high standard.'

The researcher:

**Doug Ward (Senior Research Fellow,
School of Cancer Sciences)**

'With more than 100 universities in the UK competing for research funding and the best students, anything that improves our reputation is valuable. For me, Birmingham stands out because of the quality of the biomedical research and the infrastructure to translate our findings to patient care.'

The alumna:

**Dr Carla Skinner (BSc Geological
Sciences, 1966)**

'I felt a mixture of pride and satisfaction when I heard Birmingham had won the title; it was good to see our achievements being recognised. I'd like to think that the A2B scheme, which I have supported since its inception, was one of the innovations influencing the decision.'



WHY BIRMINGHAM?



Campus

Ask an alumnus what makes Birmingham so special and the response will almost certainly include the campus. Thanks to our incredible supporters and University investment, the Aston Webb semi-circle has been transformed with the completion of the spectacular Bramall Music Building. Plans are now under way for campus developments including a brand-new library, sports centre, University Training School and modern student accommodation. This investment in facilities will transform the University's famous Edgbaston home, improve the student experience and extend services available to the local community.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2013 Birmingham moved up the rankings in each of *The Complete University Guide*, *The Guardian*, *QS World Rankings* and *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* league tables.



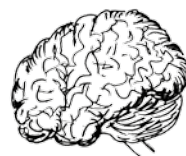
Student recruitment

Birmingham addressed the impact of higher tuition fees on student recruitment by making unconditional offers to 1,000 students predicted AAA grades at A level in 2013. This helped the University recruit some of the brightest school-leavers in the UK, while taking the pressure off the sixth-formers when they sat their summer examinations in June.



Alumni

Alumni support is crucial and has a huge impact, from mentoring students to making gifts to the *Circles of Influence* fundraising campaign. Just one example of alumni support in action is the Access to Birmingham scholarships programme; through which your donations have given 435 students from families with little experience of higher education the chance to study at Birmingham since 2007.



Birmingham Fellows

The Birmingham Fellows scheme was introduced to help give early-career academics security to develop their ideas. Since 2011, your gifts have helped more than 60 outstanding post-doctoral researchers come to the University on a trajectory to become the next generation of research and academic leaders.



Employability

The University is determined to give its students the best chance of success and 92.8% of graduates are employed or in further study six months after leaving. Students are offered extensive support through our Careers Network with initiatives including mentoring and internships provided by alumni, and a range of bursaries helping to fund work experience placements. Many other universities are following this example by introducing similar schemes.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Birmingham is University of the Year until September 2014 so please tell friends, colleagues, your family and anyone interested in studying here.



International

With almost 5,000 international students from more than 150 countries, and 31% of academic staff from overseas, Birmingham is a truly global university. Centres and research collaborations exist in key territories including Brazil, China, India and the US, and the introduction of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is digitally disseminating research expertise from Birmingham across the globe (see page 8).



World-leading research

Research at Birmingham has led to the development of new cancer drugs, innovative materials used in aerospace and automotive industries and better techniques to help entrepreneurs succeed in business. Collaborations with academic colleagues both within and outside the University, and partnerships with businesses turn academic ideas into projects that benefit society.



GUEST ED LOVES

YOUR REACTION



When the news broke about Birmingham being University of the Year, there were some amazing responses via Twitter. Here are just a few of your messages:

Roger Emmott @rogeremmott 20 Sep: Congratulations @birminghamalum on winning University of the Year. I enjoyed my time there – a long time ago!

Victoria McNamara @vickimead 20 Sep: @birminghamalum @unibirmingham @thetimes @thesundaytimes Congratulations!! I always knew we were the best!! :D)

Jonathan Nason @quayprman 20 Sep: @adnad @unibirmingham Great news to start the weekend @birminghamalum well done to one and all – makes you proud (and in my case nostalgic)

Jake Mann @MannGsy 20 Sep: Congratulations to @unibirmingham on being University of the Year! Proud to be @birminghamalum plus a good rise in the rankings tables

Judy Dyke @Judy_at_TW 20 Sep: @unibirmingham Congratulations! So proud to be an alumna and member of University Court

Zwrzi Papamihailidou @Zwrzi 20 Sep: @nytimes Uni of the Year: Uni of Birmingham! Way to go Brum! So proud to be ur alumni! @unibirmingham @birminghamalum

Chris Addison @mrchrisaddison 20 Sep: Hey! @unibirmingham only went and got named University of The Year. Well done, Brumageniuses.

You shared your answers on Facebook to the question: What was the best thing about studying at Birmingham?

Chris Leach: The beautiful campus and life there.

Eli Macher: RockSoc.

Liam Twigg: Birmingham Lions, COMAC (Community Action) and Involve, working in the Guild and being around the Guild – amazing compared to other universities' student unions.

Samuel Lear: Redbrick.

Mathias Dekeyser: International atmosphere.

Vatsala S Oberman: Very helpful lecturers, wonderful classmates and great campus.

David Cocks: The water polo club.

Sarah Bernardes: Diverse opportunities, gorgeous campus and a sense of belonging.

Judith Osborne: 35 years on: my friends and two sections of the course – one of which ended in my daughter and I visiting Antarctica – the other led to my writing a history of our church...

Tim Armitage: The campus and Guild and the Barber and Shakespeare Institute. Oh, and Edgbaston and the Villa.

Azzrai N Masuana: The people! And the surroundings... students, lecturers and non-academic staff are extensively supportive.

Research helps forests FACE the future

Trees are the building blocks of our natural landscapes but forests around the globe are under threat from climate change and disease. Thanks to a transformational £15 million gift, the University is establishing a pioneering institute of forest research to find possible solutions.



'A healthy forest is like a healthy economy, it is resilient when it is multi-functional.

'So just like an economy that relies only on banking becomes dysfunctional, a forest where a particular group of trees is destroyed by disease or the effects of climate change is in danger,' says Professor Rob MacKenzie, Director of the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR).

The Institute will conduct research into two fundamental and interrelated challenges to the world's forests: the environmental impacts of climate change and the effects of pests and disease. It will reveal credible solutions to the problems associated with sustaining forests and the vital fibre, food, fuel and environmental cleansing services they provide.

Thanks to an exceptional gift from Professor Jo Bradwell and Dr Barbara Scott (see page 30) combining with University investment, BIFoR will be unique in Europe in size, ambition and scope. As one of only three such research centres in the world, it will firmly establish the UK as a world leader in forestry research.

**‘A HEALTHY FOREST
IS LIKE A HEALTHY
ECONOMY, IT IS RESILIENT
WHEN IT IS MULTI-
FUNCTIONAL.’**

BIFoR will provide an opportunity to understand the myriad of individual processes that control how a forest landscape will evolve under the pressures of a changing environment. It will allow researchers to observe, and manipulate where possible, all the individual processes locked together within the ecosystem.

At the centre of the Institute's work will be a mature oak woodland in Staffordshire, which will be transformed with a Free-Air Carbon Enrichment (FACE) system. This will pump controlled levels of additional carbon dioxide into the atmosphere so scientists can monitor its effect on the trees, plants and animals.

The researchers are using the FACE system because they are interested in the whole forest's response to increased carbon dioxide levels, not just the individual plant's. BIFoR's research will be unique because previous experiments have

been done in plantation woodland, in very different ecosystems, or on young, growing trees. The timeframe of the project is also unprecedented; Professor MacKenzie and his team will be monitoring the experiment at least every second for at least a decade.

Many of us will remember from biology lessons at school that plants photosynthesise. The process of converting carbon dioxide into sugars produces oxygen so surely increased carbon dioxide levels are good for the plant part of the environment?

‘We expect we'll see an initially very positive response which will change over time as other aspects of the trees' health are affected,’ Professor MacKenzie says.

‘For example, some current models suggest that climate change might make the Amazon slightly drier. If that's true, one plausible response of the Amazon rainforest is to dry out and to retreat in its effort to adapt to the conditions.’





**‘WHAT WE’RE
ACTUALLY DOING IS
COMBINING EXPERTISE
THAT WE ALREADY HAVE
RIGHT ACROSS THE
UNIVERSITY.’**

BIFoR will work closely with international research centres in the US, Australia and Brazil, and a related area it will investigate is tree disease. If an epidemic such as Ash Die Back kills off a large number of trees in a forest, the amount of carbon dioxide that forest is able to absorb reduces.

‘With the global trade in plants, we need a more nimble and agile response when invasive pests and diseases arrive,’ Professor MacKenzie says.

‘It would be nice to find a magic bullet solution, but we suspect that most of the time we will be thinking about how we can manage our landscape so that when these situations inevitably arise, the result is not catastrophe.’

The FACE experiment will begin in 2016 and beforehand, the scientists will be assessing the forest’s health. This will involve departments across the University collaborating to measure the in-flows and out-flows of carbon, nitrogen and phosphorous, the main ingredients that make up living material, through the water, air and soil and, of course, through the plants and animals.

‘What we’re actually doing is combining expertise that we already have right across the University, from cultural studies, social science and environmental economics all the way through to physics, bioscience and engineering,’ Professor MacKenzie says.

‘The University has always had a very strong urban identity but, in fact, our research has been relevant to rural landscapes for decades and BIFoR will provide a very visible “home” for that fundamental work.’

Look out for further updates about BIFoR in future editions of *Old Joe*.

Responsible research

During the FACE experiment, the research team will be diverting carbon dioxide which would otherwise go into the atmosphere for scientific use. The levels of carbon dioxide pumped into the forest will not be dangerous to plants or animals.

● **Images:** (left) Professor Rob MacKenzie, Director, Birmingham Institute of Forest Research, Professor of Atmospheric Science; (below) Donors Professor Jo Bradwell and Dr Barbara Scott



© Aston and Ainsworth Photography

An incredible gift

Alumnus Professor Jo Bradwell (MBChB Medicine, 1968; HonDSc, 2011) and his wife Dr Barbara Scott (BSc Biological Sciences, 1977; PhD Medicine, 1981) have enabled the establishment of BIFoR with a £15 million donation, one of the largest ever gifts to a UK university and historically the largest ever gift to Birmingham. The gift was made through the JABBS Foundation.

Jo, who worked as a lecturer in the Department of Medicine and a senior lecturer and professor in the Department of Immunology, founded the Binding Site, a University spin-out company, in 1983. Developing diagnostic products for immune-deficiency and autoimmunity plus a range of important novel cancer tests, the company has continued to expand for 30 years, winning the Queen’s Award for Export Achievement twice, and the Queen’s Award for Enterprise.

Jo is passionate about the global issue of climate change and how our forests are threatened. He sees woodlands as patients who need diagnosing before the relevant treatment can be decided upon.

‘The UK has the lowest woodland cover of any large, European country because of deforestation over the centuries,’ he says.

‘What little we have remaining is now under serious threat from climate change and imported tree diseases. The new Institute of Forest Research will increase our understanding of these challenges in order to help planners, owners and foresters maintain and improve the health of our woods.’

Alumni events calendar

March

Arts & Science Festival, 17–21 March

This free festival will showcase culture, research, and collaboration at the University through events under the theme of 'Life & Death'.

London Professional Network, Wednesday 26 March

Network with fellow alumni from the fields of finance, insurance, property, and legal-related professions over wine and canapés in the magnificent BT Tower.

Leaders of Tomorrow Reception London, Thursday 27 March

An opportunity for alumni and supporters to meet some of the students who have benefitted from the University's student support programmes. All welcome, please RSVP.

September

British Science Festival, 6–11 September

See page 34 for further information.

Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association Forum and AGM and 50th Anniversary/Golden Reunion Lunch, Saturday 13 September

All alumni are invited to attend an Annual Forum on campus including a talk by guest speaker the Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe (BA Latin, 1969; DUniv, 2012). Alumni who graduated in 1964 or before are welcome to join for a special reunion lunch. Further details to be confirmed nearer the time. Please email alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk or ggaapresident@bhamalumni.org to register your interest by 30 April.

Dates for the diary:

Barber Institute of Fine Arts: *Visualising the Divine on Byzantine and Early Islamic Coinage*, until November 2014. Visit www.barber.org.uk for more information.

House of Lords Reception, Friday 7 November, 6.45–8.30pm

Tickets for the 11th annual reception at the House of Lords will be available to book online in August. All alumni will receive an email notification.

To find out more about any of these events, or for help organising your own reunion, please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events, email alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk or call the events team on +44 (0)121 414 8904. Event invitations are usually sent by email – update your details via alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk or www.your.bham.ac.uk to ensure you don't miss out!

April

Fab 'n' Refresh, Saturday 26 April

Join fellow graduates from the past ten years for a Guild night exclusively for alumni. To purchase tickets, visit www.guildtickets.co.uk

May

Mining and Minerals Engineering 16th Reunion Dinner, 9–11 May

Join former students and staff for a weekend of social events. Contact Iain Wells at iain.wells@tiscali.co.uk

Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series, Tuesday 20 May

Professor Sir Hew Strachan, Professor of the History of War, University of Oxford, will speak in the Elgar Concert Hall.

June

Happiness Lecture, Wednesday 11 June

Actor, comedian, and writer Chris Addison (BA English, 1994; Hon DUniv, 2013) will speak on the theme of happiness. A private reception will be held for those who have remembered the University in their will.

Alumni Sports Day, Saturday 14 June

Ticket includes tournament entry, a drink, and your ticket to Fab at the Guild. For further information visit www.sport.bham.ac.uk or follow @AlumniSportsDay on Twitter

Most of the events above are aimed specifically at alumni. For the University events calendar, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/events

Priestley Lecture 2014

Speakers this year include Baroness Estelle Morris (Thursday 27 March). Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/priestley for further updates and details.

Newman House 50th anniversary reunion

All past residents and anyone connected with the University's Catholic Chaplaincy are invited to attend the celebration. For further details, please contact Sr Una at u.coogan@bham.ac.uk or Dirk Hermans at d.f.m.hermans@bham.ac.uk.

Securing the future of world society

New Institute looks to
understand the biggest
global threats and learn
the lessons of the past.



Iran blames West for talks failure. EU clinches deal on 2014 budget. PM to lead trade delegation to China. Read the news headlines on any given day and a common thread is clear. Our global community is more interconnected than ever before – a world society without a world government, leading to a raft of positive consequences alongside tension and potentially disastrous conflict.

The need for a greater understanding of what living in this global city means for us all prompted the launch of the University's Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS) in 2012, with the purpose of developing a multidisciplinary approach to the study of conflict and security in the modern world.

'The imperative for international cooperation has never been greater,' explains Professor of International Relations Nick Wheeler, Director of the ICCS. 'There is a need for political, economic and social structures to manage global security issues such as nuclear proliferation, climate change, and population growth. Creating a humane global policy without it leading to a situation where the threat or use of violence is an ever-present factor is the challenge that informs the Institute's work.'

Within its four themes – Mediation and Conflict Management; Cooperation and Trust-building; Intervention and State-building; and Science and Global Security – the ICCS draws in research from across the University, including the International Development Department; the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences; and the Centre for War Studies among others. Professor Wheeler explains: 'The Institute is bringing together existing strengths at Birmingham and this is what makes our work special. This interdisciplinary approach and focus on the challenge of cooperation is unique.'

One project already under way is investigating the implications of using remotely piloted aircraft – better known as drones – in Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The work includes a Birmingham Policy Commission

Opportunities at the ICCS include:

- **Postgraduate study:** MSc in Global Cooperation and Security; PhD programme (coming soon), MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) in Cooperation (coming soon)
- **Training:** Five-day intensive programme; bespoke training programme (up to ten weeks) on Diplomacy, Negotiation and Mediation; short-term, voluntary work placements within the ICCS; regular seminar series (also available as podcasts)
- **Sharing:** Alumni can contribute to the regular ICCS Brief or choose to write posts for the blog

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STRENGTHS AT
BIRMINGHAM AND
THIS IS WHAT
MAKES OUR WORK
SPECIAL. ”**

(bringing leading figures from the public, private and third sectors together with Birmingham academics) chaired by Professor Sir David Omand, the UK's former Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator and Director of Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).

'This research, investigating how conflicting perceptions of drone use is shaping the propensities for conflict and cooperation between and within states, shows we are right on the cutting edge of global security issues,' says Professor Wheeler.

'This is very important. We are committed to producing world-leading research, but our work must also speak to practitioners from the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence to non-governmental organisations (NGOs).'

As well as internationally relevant research, the Institute also has an evolving programme of teaching and training. ICCS Manager Catherine Edwards explains: 'The existing toolkit is underdeveloped because it doesn't speak to the challenges at a global level, which is where our training differs. Our programme will help us attract the best and brightest young researchers, as well as doctoral researchers, Birmingham Fellows, and more established scholars who can add experience and depth of intellectual engagement.'

With a remit focused on real impact the Institute has a clear ambition: to put the University on the map for anyone addressing the challenge of international cooperation.

Learn more www.birmingham.ac.uk/iccs



Work kicks off on £55 million sports centre

New centre will cater for everyone from community users to students, staff and elite athletes.

The first 50-metre swimming pool in Birmingham has moved a step closer to reality with work beginning on the University's new £55 million sports centre in April.

The centre is being supported by a £2 million grant from Sport England and donations of more than £320,000 so far from alumni and friends of the University. As well as the pool, it will offer an arena sports hall with seating for more than 1,000 spectators, six squash courts, seven activity rooms for a wide range of fitness classes, a 225 station gym and other facilities.

'We're very excited that construction is about to start,' says Director of Sport

Zena Wooldridge. 'The new facilities, and opportunities they will house, will be a game-changer for the University, both in raising its profile as a leading UK sporting university, and in its provision for the local and regional community.'

The development, led by international construction group, Interserve, will also incorporate a purpose-designed Well Being and Performance Centre. Zena says: 'The facilities will provide a high-quality experience for our leading regional and national sportsmen and women, and better serve those with disabilities, injuries or health issues, or who just want to keep fit or play

sport socially. The generous support of alumni makes a real difference to our plans, enabling us to create a building that reflects Birmingham's status as one of the top three universities for sport in the UK.'

Later this year, an exciting interactive campaign will be launched to raise awareness as the build continues.

To make a gift, please contact Jessica Robinson via +44 (0)121 414 9162 or j.m.robinson@bham.ac.uk

Learn more

www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving/sportscentre.aspx

● Images: Artist's impressions of the new £55 million sports centre



Seismic scientific celebrations

A celebration of science, engineering and technology is coming to campus in September after the University was chosen to host the British Science Festival 2014.

The festival encourages researchers to share their work with the public through entertaining and thought-provoking events for everyone, from families to professionals. Running from 6–11 September, this year's programme will also incorporate the University's annual Community Day.

Alice Roberts, Professor of Public Engagement in Science, says: 'There are an incredible amount of opportunities for the University to engage with the public in 2014

and we're very excited to be hosting the festival.

'This event is Europe's largest public science celebration and will present the very latest in scientific research, explore its impact on our lives and allow the public to talk directly to researchers.'

In the accompanying schools' programme, students aged 14–19 will be asked where science can take them through a series of interactive activities. Alumni who work in the science or engineering industries have the opportunity to get involved by volunteering to give talks or offering work shadowing, work experience or business mentoring to young people.

Anyone willing to volunteer their



services should email alumni-volunteers@contacts.bham.ac.uk with a brief outline of how they are able to help.

The festival is open to everyone. Visit www.britishtscienceassociation.org/british-science-festival for further details of events.

To watch the
festival video
scan here





● **Images:** (right) Artist's impression of the University School, which now has planning consent; (below) new Principal Michael Roden

PRINCIPAL APPOINTED FOR UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

Marking a critical step towards its launch, the University of Birmingham School has appointed its Principal.

Michael Roden, Head of King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys in Birmingham, will join the University School this April to prepare for its proposed opening in September 2015. On accepting the post, he said: 'I am delighted to be asked to lead this exciting and unique addition to the educational provision in the city.'

The school will be a free, mixed ability, co-educational state institution for students aged 11–16, with an academically selective sixth form. Located near the University's main campus in Edgbaston it will take pupils from across Birmingham, helping meet

the city's anticipated shortfall in secondary school places.

'This is a critical appointment, not just for the University but for the city,' says Vice-Chancellor Professor David Eastwood. 'Michael Roden has a proven track record leading one of the best schools in the country. His new challenge will be recreating this level of excellence at a school that is non-selective for pupils aged 11–16, developing an exciting and innovative sixth form provision, and establishing the school as a beacon of excellence in teacher development.'

Learn more or find out how you can support the school www.birmingham.ac.uk/university-school



NEWS IN BRIEF



Meet Pete the Beaker

For World Cancer Day 2014, a new animation featuring Pete the Beaker showing how the University is fighting cancer thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends raised more than £700. Watch the animation at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw2dNrXfHN4 and share it to help Pete find more friends to beat cancer.

Queen's English

Queen Elizabeth I was a pioneer of the English language, adopting new forms of speech and making progressive steps towards the modern, standardised system of English national spelling; according to a new book *The Language of Queen Elizabeth I* by University of Birmingham academic Dr Melanie Evans.



Do you see yourself here?

Following the request for alumni memories in the September 2013 edition of *Old Joe*, Odilon Talbot (MSc Engineering Production, 1967) sent in this picture taken in 1966 of himself and friends after a Sunday lunch at the University's Catholic Chaplaincy, Newman House.

If you recognise yourself, please email alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk and send your own memories of your time here to the same address.



GUEST ED LOVES



Rare bone *legs it to Lapworth*

A gift from an alumnus has enabled the Lapworth Museum of Geology to buy an exceptionally rare dinosaur leg bone.

“IT WILL BE INVALUABLE, BOTH AS A DISPLAY PIECE AND AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL.”

The anonymous alumnus funded the purchase of the 1.2 metre femur bone from a mature *Cetiosauriscus*, a type of large sauropod dinosaur from the middle Jurassic period, 165 million years ago. Sauropods (well-known types of which include *Brachiosaurus* and *Diplodocus*) from England are virtually unknown and this belongs to a species only found in Northern Europe.

Jon Clatworthy, Director of the Lapworth, says: 'The femur is a fantastic addition to the Lapworth Museum's collections and we are grateful to the alumnus for his generous gift which allowed us to acquire the specimen. It fills a gap in the Lapworth's collections, as large sauropod bones of this type are extremely rare in the UK. It will be invaluable, both as a display piece and educational tool, helping to demonstrate the size of these iconic animals.'

Plans will shortly be submitted for a full redevelopment of the Lapworth, following the award of a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2013.

Learn more or find out how you could support the Museum
www.lapworth.bham.ac.uk

DIDYOUKNOW?

Well-known author and broadcaster Alice Roberts is the University's first Professor of Public Engagement in Science. As well as academic duties Professor Roberts works to promote the University's academics and research, and inspire people about science.

DIDYOUKNOW?

The Bramall Music Building hosted the BBC's topical debate programme *Question Time* in October 2013.

The building, which was made possible thanks to the support of more than 275 donors giving £6 million, celebrated its first anniversary weekend in November 2013 with a concert performed by four different University choirs.

Learn more

Watch a time-lapse video of the building being set up for *Question Time* at <http://bit.ly/1f5MjaB>



Get involved with the Barber

If you've ever wanted to have your say on the Barber Institute of Fine Arts' exhibitions and collections, the new Barber Association is the society for you.

Open to students and alumni, the association will get people involved in shaping a more dynamic, creative Barber Institute.

Through events from gallery guide training and drawing sessions, to exhibitor Q&As, members can find out about the Barber and share their thoughts on its work.

Andrew Davies, Communications

and Marketing Manager, says: 'We want students past and present to tell us about what they want to see taking place here. Members will also have access to talks and networking events featuring alumni who are now museum and gallery professionals.'

If you work in a museum or gallery and would like to share your experiences with current students, contact andrewd Davies@barber.org.uk

Learn more

barber.org.uk/the-barber-association



Creating cultural careers

Alumni can help students to complete a cultural internship at the Institute through supporting the Barber Benefactors' Scheme. For further information, visit barber.org.uk/benefactors



Kick-starting businesses

New businesses with innovative technology-based concepts can access a range of valuable services through the University's BizzInn initiative.

BizzInn offers free services to entrepreneurs including work space, meeting space and free guidance and practical advice on how to start and grow your business operation.

Alumni with innovative business ideas who would benefit from access to free space and a support network should contact Paul Field on p.field@bham.ac.uk

Your gifts transform students' lives



More young people than ever are realising their potential at Birmingham thanks to your support; from partnerships with local schools encouraging talented children to aspire to higher education, to scholarships providing financial support, and internships to improve employment prospects.

'This is about telling young people that their talent and drive to succeed is what matters,' says Anne Snell, Access to Birmingham (A2B) Manager. 'Time and again, students say that the fact someone they have never met believes in them drives them on even more to succeed. These gifts genuinely transform lives and I cannot thank you enough.'

In thanks for her scholarship, first year BMedSc student Maimoona Ahmed wrote: 'You gave a girl who never believed in herself another reason to hold on but it isn't just about the money. My scholarship shows my peers they can do it too. They can aspire to be something, and with hard work and commitment their dream can be made a reality.'

Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving/Ourprojects.aspx to find out how you can help.

DID YOU KNOW?

Access to Birmingham (A2B) was shortlisted for the *Times Higher Education* Widening Participation Initiative of the Year in 2013.



A selection of news from around the University. To find out about your school or department, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk

**COME BACK AND VISIT
CAMPUS ON COMMUNITY DAY –
SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER**

From the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Chemistry; Metallurgy and Materials

Two schools have won funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for Centres for Doctoral Training; Physical Sciences for Health in the School of Chemistry and Innovative Metal Processing in the School of Metallurgy and Materials.

College-wide

The College will be holding an Alumni Reunion on 14 June 2014 for all graduates, with an opportunity to visit schools, catch up with colleagues and meet students. Invitations have been sent, please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/epsreunion2014 to book your place. The new College Research Brochure can be downloaded at www.birmingham.ac.uk/research-brochure



From the College of Arts and Law

Modern Languages

Using alumni funding, the Department has made a short film capturing the variety and talents of students, academics and alumni to inspire the next generation of linguists.

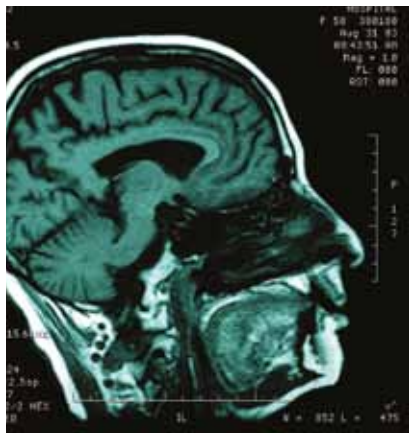
Watch the film

youtube.com/watch?v=rM_b9DgMXjw



War Studies

The centenary of the beginning of the First World War will be marked with the Birmingham Great War Lecture Series: Road to War, featuring noted academics examining the events which led to the outbreak of war. In October, the work of war artist C R Nevinson will be discussed during an exhibition at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.



From the College of Life and Environmental Sciences

Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences

A study has been launched investigating the effects to the brains of sportspeople in the aftermath of a concussion. Jointly led by Dr Michael J Grey, Reader in Motor Neuroscience, and Tony Belli from Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the research will particularly look at 'second impact syndrome', which occurs when a player who has sustained one concussion receives a second bang to the head. It is hoped the study could eventually lead to a completely objective test for sportspeople suspected of suffering a concussion, aiding in the difficult decision of whether to return to play.

From the College of Social Sciences

The Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Enterprise (CREME)

With a mission to make diversity and enterprise everyone's business, CREME is now based in Birmingham Business School. The Centre, headed by Professor Monder Ram OBE, delivers leading-edge expertise on business support for ethnic minority entrepreneurs, while working to transform perceptions through its work with policy makers and influential organisations.

Learn more www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/business/creme/index.aspx

From the College of Medical and Dental Sciences

Physician Associate training

A new-look Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies has been launched by the University in partnership with University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and other Midlands Trusts. Although relatively new to the UK, the NHS is planning rapid growth in coming years of the role, which supports doctors in the diagnosis and management of patients.

Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM)

A new £24 million medical research area is to bring together academics, clinicians and industry. On the old Queen Elizabeth (QE) Hospital site, the ITM will house experts from the new QE Hospital, the University, and Birmingham Children's Hospital; and host pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, all focusing on early phase clinical trials.



From UBSport

A new film showcasing sport at Birmingham is aiming to encourage all students to make sport a part of their time at the University. Featuring sports as diverse as football, basketball, cheerleading, lacrosse, rugby and more, the film is set to the theme tune of *You Are My Birmingham* sung by student Katie Lavine (BMus Music).

Watch the video [youtube.com/watch?v=1Ur_EufI93A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ur_EufI93A)



University is gateway to a golden career



Mining a new field of knowledge at Birmingham led Ioannis (Yannis) Tsitos into a career taking in 32 countries, one miraculous moment, and the search for gold.

Although his career in the mining industry spans almost three decades, it is an event from his days as a young geophysicist that still marks Ioannis Tsitos's proudest moment.

Working in Africa, he was sent to a small village whose inhabitants had to walk eight miles to get dirty water to drink. Then the team found a source of clean water underground. Ioannis

“WE PUT A PUMP
DOWN AND FRESH WATER
JUST CAME POURING OUT.
THE CHILDREN WERE
JUMPING AND PLAYING IN
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INCREDIBLE AND IT’S
NEVER LEFT ME.”

remembers: ‘We put a pump down and fresh water just came pouring out. The children were jumping and playing in it – their joy was incredible and it’s never left me.’

Ioannis (MSc Geological Sciences, 1986) now lives in Vancouver, Canada and is the President and CEO of Eagle Mountain Gold Corp., a Canadian gold exploration company focused in Guyana, but his passion for



● Images: (left) Alumnus Ioannis Tsitos and (right) Eagle Mountain geologists working in Guyana (below left) Eagle Mountain deposit drilling



all things scientific didn't always go to plan. Born and raised in Athens, he nearly set the family home on fire aged eight when one of his many chemical experiments went awry. But, enthusiasm still aflame, he went on to complete an undergraduate degree in physics at the University of Athens before heading to Birmingham for a Masters in Applied Geophysics.

'The transition was tough in the beginning, especially with the language barrier, but everyone was so welcoming I settled in quickly,' he says. 'I also had no clue about geology as I came from a physics background so I asked my professors for help and, in parallel with the Masters and English language training, I did modules of an undergraduate geology degree. I would study up to 2.00am, as my father was paying half his pension for me to be there so I had to focus. It had its challenges, but it was a great experience and without it, I wouldn't be where I am today.'

Ioannis also has fond memories of the Lapworth, one of the oldest specialist geological museums in the UK sited in the Aston Webb Building. 'I remember finding amazing maps, fossils, minerals and models – it was incredibly diverse. Having that in the place you were studying was fantastic and really unique.'

After his Masters and two years' national service in the Greek navy, Ioannis joined the University of Athens as an assistant lecturer but knew he wanted to apply his industry knowledge. He took a job with mining giant BHP Billiton in South Africa, where he moved with his wife Ioanna; and went on to stay with the company for 19 years, working around the world.

Now, his focus is on Eagle Mountain's current explorations in Guyana, a country of around 750,000 people on the northern coast of South America. Although the company has no extraction operations yet, great care is still needed to manage ethical considerations and the effects on the local environment and community.

'My first priority is social and environmental issues, so we work closely with the Guyanese government. If a tree has stood for 150 years, I don't want to cut it down, so we have been working in partnership with our local teams to avoid that happening.'

'As a big company, we rightly have to give an account of ourselves and report back about our activities. We are accountable for good methods of exploration, like state-of-the-art technology that isolates harmful chemicals and removes them from the environment. That is part of our investment and the buck for that stops on my desk.'

The father-of-two hopes the company will reach extraction of gold in the next ten to 12 months, and it is obvious that exploration still brings him a buzz of excitement. He believes his time at Birmingham developed his exploratory nature and gave him the understanding to apply his ideas.

'If I had to write a book of my life, one chapter would have to be about university because it is so important. In Guyana, we are helping bright children who would not otherwise have access to higher education. I want to give them what I have had.'

Learn more

www.eaglemountaingoldcorp.com

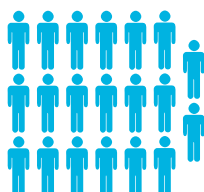
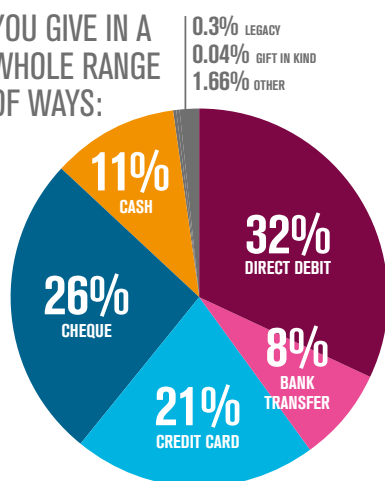
**I REMEMBER
FINDING AMAZING MAPS,
FOSSILS, MINERALS AND
MODELS IN THE LAPWORTH
MUSEUM. HAVING THAT
IN THE PLACE YOU
WERE STUDYING WAS
FANTASTIC AND REALLY
UNIQUE.**

Thank you for your gifts



Your generosity continues to change lives, with the range of ways in which you give only matched by the diversity of projects you help to fund. Your gifts support talented students who would otherwise be unable to attend university, enable lifesaving research and innovations, and help develop a campus for future generations. **Thank you.**

YOU GIVE IN A
WHOLE RANGE
OF WAYS:



GIFTS FROM £1



HAVE SUPPORTED A RANGE OF PROJECTS FROM **20 MEN**
ON A **PROSTATE CANCER TRIAL** TO THE **BIRMINGHAM**
INSTITUTE FOR FOREST RESEARCH (BIFoR)



THE UNIVERSITY'S
SUPPORTERS LIVE
ON EVERY CONTINENT
EXCEPT ANTARCTICA

YOU GIVE TO RESEARCH
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STUDENT SUPPORT
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CAMPUS DEVELOPMENTS
£1,804,396
INNOVATION AND IMMEDIATE IMPACT
£171,745

1,350
OF YOU
MADE A GIFT
TO THE UNIVERSITY
FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN
2013

4,551 OF YOU GAVE IN TOTAL IN 2013

COMPARED TO
590
OF YOU IN
2009

DID YOU KNOW?

You can do something fun or challenging to raise money for the University through **JustGiving**.
Email giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk to request a fundraising pack.



Robot reaches out to children with autism



GUEST ED LOVES



Your gifts are further improving how Nao the robot can support children with autism.



Nao the humanoid robot has become even better at helping children with autism, thanks to a collaborative student project funded by alumni.

University researchers had been taking Nao into Topcliffe Primary School in Castle Vale, Birmingham with positive results but, while Nao was able to show actions for the children to imitate, it was harder for the robot to recognise what the children were doing.

Using alumni funding, students from the Schools of Education and Computer Science developed a game that used artificial intelligence to help Nao recognise emotions.

'Understanding communication as a two-way process is a key area for children with autism, so for Nao to be able to respond like this is important,' says Dr Karen Guldberg, Director of the Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER). 'The tasks within the game were designed to help children recognise emotions by focusing on body language.'

As well as enhancing the robot's capabilities, the project also benefited the students. 'It was incredible seeing the children trying to comfort the robot when it cried, or talking into its ears,' says Tristan Bell (second year, BSc Computer Science). 'The project showed the value of an interdisciplinary team, and made clear how different children with autism can be when working with robots. It was a fantastic experience.'

So how might the project change how Nao works in the future? Dr Nick Hawes, Lecturer in Intelligent Robotics, explains: 'In writing the software, the students focused on trying to enrich interactions but the project showed that actually the interaction needs to be simpler. For example, we thought the robot's responses were slow, whereas we know now this is perfectly suited to children with autism who need a lot of processing time.'

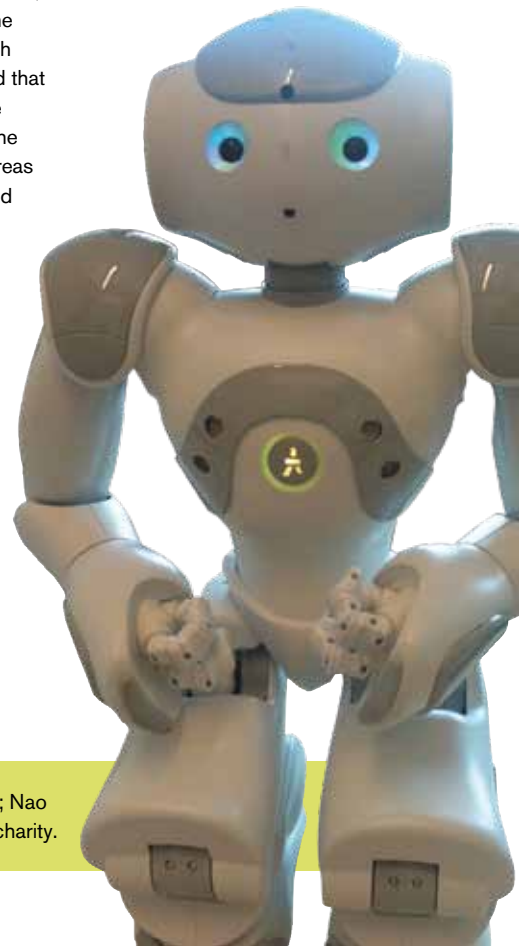
Dr Guldberg adds: 'Nao is making a real difference to the lives of these children. The transformation in them when they see Nao is incredible; they absolutely adore it. I would like to thank everyone whose gifts made this happen, because the project would not have been possible without your support.'

Learn more

<http://youtu.be/MqtkKAUWy3Y>
or support children with autism
www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving/Autism.aspx



● Images: (left) Researchers using Nao at Topcliffe Primary School and (above) Computer Science student Tristan Bell



DID YOU KNOW?

A 58cm tall humanoid robot made by French company Aldebaran Robotics; Nao can dance, drive a (small) car and has even circumnavigated the globe for charity.

Have you ever wondered what other former Birmingham students are doing now? Or wanted to tell your fellow alumni about your achievements? Share your news and update your contact information by contacting us using the enclosed data form or emailing alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk. We will print as many updates as we can.

YOUR NEWS

1970s

David Fletcher (BSc Chemistry, 1970)
I spent my first working life as an accountant, but have now found my true calling – as a writer of dubious humour. Please do visit my website at www.davidfletcherbooks.co.uk where you will find not a test-tube or a ledger in sight, but just a selection of humorous sci-fi and travel books (one of which does make a reference to solid-state chemistry).



Jean Summers (née Little) (BA French and German Studies, 1975)
After my daughter grew up, I fulfilled a long-held wish and trained and worked as an actor. This eventually led to me becoming a Birmingham student again, doing a part-time Shakespeare and Theatre MA at the Shakespeare Institute. It was rather scary to be writing essays again after such a long time, but I'm thoroughly enjoying it. Very best wishes to the linguists of 1975 and old friends from High/Ridge Halls 1971 to '73.

Anita Greenwood (BSc Biological Sciences, 1975; PGCE, 1976)
After graduation I taught in Berkshire for seven years, before moving to the US with my husband **Tim Greenwood** (MEng Electrical Engineering, 1975;

MSci Computer Sciences, 1976). After receiving my doctorate in education, I became a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. I am now Dean of Education and look forward to visiting Birmingham's School of Education in the near future.

Michael Schwartz (BA Ancient and Modern Greek, 1976)
I am now totally freelance, mainly writing articles for the business press. I am Toronto University's go-to guy for teaching Modern Greek to those Torontonians who have slipped through the linguistic net, or non-Greeks who want to know what their future in-laws are saying about them. My wife Hazel and I are preparing a rail trip from Beijing to Moscow – not the same as the 61 bus to Manor House!



Dr John Wallace (MSc Clinical Psychology, 1977)
After Psychology at Birmingham, I went back to college to study medicine. This was followed by research at the Maudsley Hospital in London. Having finished an MSc at Wadham College, Oxford, I am currently lucky enough to be completing a PhD at Oxford in evidence-based medicine.

1980s

Martin D Hyden (BSc Chemistry, 1983)
Since leaving Birmingham, I have built up a wide-ranging European patent practice. In January 2014, I became a partner in the new London office of Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP, one of the world's largest intellectual property law firms.



Colette Redmond (née Waldron) (BSocSc History and Social Science, 1984)
My son **Benedict Redmond** (BA Philosophy, 2013) graduated from Birmingham in July 2013 with a 2:1 degree and I thoroughly enjoyed revisiting campus while he was studying there. My daughter Ciara started in sixth form last autumn and she is also keen to follow in our footsteps and study at Birmingham.

Pamela Mykytowych (née Reid) (BSocSc Social Policy and Social Work, 1985)
After spending two-and-a-half years living in Singapore, during which time my husband and I explored South East Asia, we have now moved on to live in Taiwan for a while.



Paul Clarkson (BSc Physics, 2009; MSc Physics, 2010)

I worked for Rolls-Royce for three years and am currently doing a PhD in Nanotechnology at Cambridge. I've written a comedy play *Death Ship 666!*, which moved back to London after a sold-out run at the Edinburgh Festival. I also won an award at the Global Grand Challenge Summit, presented by singer Will.i.am and Dr Charles Elachi, Director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

1990s

Lisa Chen (LLB Law, 1992)

I have been promoted to council at global law firm Davis Polk, working in the Litigation Department, resident in Hong Kong. My practice focuses primarily on advising the financial services industry on contentious regulatory matters, including regulatory investigations and enforcement.

Wendy Jones (née Grist)
(MBChB Medicine, 1994)

Having stopped work to have a family several years ago, I have swapped the stethoscope for the pen.

My first book, *The Songbird and the Soldier*, is available to download now and expected to arrive in paperback in the near future. Visit www.harperimpulseromance.com and www.facebook.com/escapeintolove.

I am married to **Dr Andy Jones** (MBChB Medicine, 1994), and we live in Herefordshire with our two boys.

Russell Norris (BA Ancient History and Archaeology/English, 2001)

After graduation, I chose to write for a living. From 2002–2012, I served as a marketing copywriter for various London-based companies (QVC: The Home Shopping Channel, AOL, Sony PlayStation). In 2012, I became a freelance copywriter and in 2013, I had my first novel published.

You can find out more about my book online: www.facebook.com/UnderTheArcadeLRNorris

Rachel-Kim Dallimore (née Kenneway)
(BSc Physiotherapy, 2006)

I am a Principal Physiotherapist at Alexandra Hospital in Singapore. I was recently posted to The Alfred Hospital in Melbourne to observe in their world-renowned trauma unit, and was assigned to shadow **Sara Calthorpe (née Scott)** (BSc Physiotherapy, 2001). With the University in common we got on straight away and it was great to share stories of our time at Birmingham.

Goodnight Mister Tom, along with a stint at The Royal Shakespeare Company. Since then I have joined Milton Keynes Theatre as a full-time Stage and Flys Technician and will be getting married later this year! The changes since graduating highlight how fast time can fly!



Hannah Kerrigan
(BA Social Work, 2010)

I am Philanthropy Manager for Sanctuary Retreats, a grouping of Luxury Safari Lodges based in Africa. I head community development work varying from health initiatives and educational development to infrastructure.

Ummy Mansor (BSc Chemistry, 2011)

I'm now a lecturer of chemistry.

Heri Wahyu Maryanto
(MSc Computer Science, 2013)

My year at the University was very valuable and memorable. Graduating from the best computer science school in the UK is an advantage to my career now and in the future. I'm currently working in Bank Rakyat Indonesia.

Alex Whiteley (BA Drama and English Literature, 2013)

I'm staying in the Birmingham family by studying on the first year of the new Shakespeare and Creativity MA at the Shakespeare Institute.

2000s



Richard Campbell (BSc Applied and Environmental Geology, 2000)

I'm currently teaching GCSE science resits at Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, hoping to teach geology from next year. I've been married for four years to Laura (also a teacher) and have a two-year-old son, Lucas.

Haytham Abushaban
(MBA International Business, 2008)

I was selected last September to participate on an International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), USA Entrepreneurship and Business Management – Multi Regional Program, by the US State Department, representing my country.

2010s

Jenny Dudden
(BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 2010)

Since graduating I've been fortunate to fall straight into the world of theatre; with work experience at the Royal Opera House, touring as ASM on

Honorary graduates



Nine outstanding individuals and alumni received honorary degrees in December 2013.

1 Terry Morgan (MSc Engineering Production, 1978)

Terry's numerous high-profile roles include Chairman of Crossrail and Non-Executive Chairman of the Manufacturing Technology Centre and the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering. He began his career in the automotive industry and is a former MD of Land Rover vehicles.

2 Dame Julie Moore

A graduate nurse who worked in clinical practice before moving into management, Dame Julie was appointed Chief Executive of University Hospitals Birmingham in 2006.

3 Anne Wood CBE

Anne is the Founder of Ragdoll Productions, a television production company which has made more than 1,500 programmes aimed at very young viewers including double BAFTA-winning *In the Night Garden*.

4 Adrian Shooter

Adrian joined British Rail as an Engineering Management Trainee in 1970, starting an illustrious career in the rail industry spanning more than 40 years, which led to him becoming MD of Chiltern Railways in 1993 and Chairman in 2002.

5 Adrian Lester OBE

Leading actor and director of stage and screen, Adrian played the title roles in *Othello* and *Henry V* at the National Theatre, and *Hamlet*, directed by Peter Brook. Hollywood movies include *Primary Colours* and *The Day After Tomorrow*. In Britain, Adrian is well known for playing Mickey Bricks in the successful BBC series *Hustle*.

6 Deborah Cadbury

Deborah is an Emmy award-winning journalist and historian who has also worked as a BBC producer for 30 years. She has written seven non-fiction books, including *The Lost King of France*; and a seven-part drama documentary series, *Seven Wonders of the Industrial World* [2003], all of which have been critically acclaimed.

7 Guy Look (BCom Industrial Economics and Business Studies, 1979)

Guy has more than 30 years' experience in local and overseas financial and general management, and was named by *Asiamoney* as Best Executive in Hong Kong 2012. He is Vice-Chairman of the Hong Kong Retail Management Association.

8 Professor Peter Leslie Weissberg (MBCbB Medicine, 1976; MD Medicine, 1985)

Peter is Medical Director of the British Heart Foundation, where he oversees funding for more than half the cardiovascular research undertaken in UK universities.

9 Professor Sir Kenneth Murray FRS (BSc Chemistry, 1956; PhD, 1959; Hon DSc, 1995) and Professor Lady Noreen Murray CBS FRS (PhD Microbiology, 1959; Hon DSc, 1995)

Sir Kenneth's research into DNA and Lady Noreen's into fungal genetics led to them creating the first vaccine against viral hepatitis B, saving a countless number of lives around the world. The couple met at Birmingham and their support for scientific postgraduate scholarships at the University saw them posthumously inducted in 2013 into the Chancellor's Guild of Benefactors, the greatest honour the University can bestow on a donor.

WIN

YOUR CHANCE TO
WIN UNIVERSITY
MERCHANDISE

How to enter: Cut out and return your completed entry (photocopies accepted) to: *Old Joe*, Alumni Office, University of Birmingham, Birmingham Research Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2SQ, UK by 31 May 2014. Terms and conditions apply: www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni



Where on campus?

This painting by John Chubb (BSc Physics, 1953; PhD Physics, 1957) was done from the roof of a building on the main Edgbaston campus. For your chance to win, simply identify which building that was.

Please email your answer to alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk with your name, address and telephone number.

Children's corner

Is your child aged under 12? Do they love robots just like Nao, who's used by University researchers to support children with autism (see page 43)? **If so, they could design their very own robot to win Moshi Monster merchandise of their choice to the value of £25!** To enter, they should draw their robot, describe what it does, then post their entry to the address above.

Your robot's name:

What can it do?

Your name:

Your age:

Parent or guardian's name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:

Parent's degree, year and subject of graduation
(for example BA English, 2008):

Friends forever



Did you make friends for life at Birmingham? Are you still as close with your university friends as ever, despite leaving campus behind? Share your stories on Twitter using the hashtag **#UoBFF**

In celebration of the amazing friendships students have made at Birmingham over the years, there is a special new Twitter hashtag **#UoBFF** (University of Birmingham Friends Forever).

Use **#UoBFF** to tweet your great stories of lifelong friendship – who are the people you've formed extraordinary, lasting bonds with? Why do they remain such good friends?

Have they given you life-changing advice? Have they always been there for you through thick and thin?

Don't worry if you don't have a Twitter account but have a fantastic story to share, as you can write to: **alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk**. We would welcome all of your stories and photos, and the best will appear in the next issue of *Old Joe*.

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