

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

# alumni news

MAY 2012

## Meet Mr Moshi

Michael Acton Smith on his internet phenomenon

**Circles of Influence, the next phase**  
Our multi-million pound fundraising campaign  
moves forward, **see pages 8-11**



Circles of influence campaign

'Tilt and turn' format.  
Flip over to read the Difference

# THE FIRST WORD



With the London Olympics approaching, 2012 is a big year for the UK and it has certainly been a landmark year for the University. We have much to celebrate but, as ever, are striving to improve on our success and take our place on the winner's podium.

The start of the academic year saw our Circles of Influence fundraising campaign surpass its £60 million target, providing investment that will impact across campus and beyond. I would like to thank warmly all alumni and supporters who made this possible; you can read more about what your gifts have helped us to achieve in *the Difference*.

Inside this newsletter you will find details of the second phase of the campaign. We have an ambitious combined new total of £160 million to aim for and your support

will again enable Birmingham to achieve great things on a local, national and international level.

This publication also includes a round-up of news from across the University and our alumni community. From the success of Ironman triathlete Chrissie Wellington to the Birmingham Fellows scheme attracting the best young researchers, you will see our achievements are numerous. To return to my Olympics analogy, Birmingham is a university that is in the race and wants to win. We have the enthusiasm, ideas and commitment to succeed.

Aspirations raised, we must harness our 'team spirit' and pass the baton to future generations. I hope you will cheer us on.

Best wishes

**Professor David Eastwood**  
Vice-Chancellor and Donor

## Keep in touch with your university

Contact Jo Clark, Alumni Communications Manager, and Amy Cory, Alumni Communications Officer, via:

**Tel:** +44 (0)121 414 2789

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**Post:** Development and Alumni Relations Office, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, England

Update your details or share your news online at [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk) or find us on:

**Facebook** – [www.facebook.com/birminghamalumni](http://www.facebook.com/birminghamalumni)

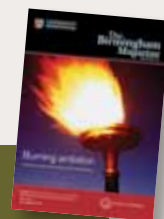
**LinkedIn** – search for the 'University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends' group

**Twitter** – follow [@birminghamalumni](https://twitter.com/birminghamalumni)

**YouTube** – watch videos at [www.youtube.com/user/unibirmingham](http://www.youtube.com/user/unibirmingham)

The views and opinions expressed in *alumni news* and *the Difference* are not necessarily those of the Alumni Office or the University of Birmingham. If you have difficulties reading any part of this publication, please contact us to request a plain text version.

## 2011 Magazine competition winners



Congratulations to the winners of the 2011 *Birmingham Magazine* competitions. Jacob Gower (MSc Mathematics, 2010) received copies of all five of David Lodge's recommended books featured in the magazine.

Crossword competition winner Gillian Mitchell (MSc Biochemistry, 1984) and Sudoku puzzle winner Frank Burnett (BPhil Education, 1977) both won University merchandise.



# Broadcaster finds herself in *new starring role*

Best known for her journeys around Britain in programmes such as *Coast* and *Time Team*, Alice Roberts has turned her feet firmly in the direction of Birmingham to take up an appointment as Professor of Public Engagement in Science.

Since starting in the role earlier this year, the clinical anatomist, author and broadcaster has been dividing her time between lecturing undergraduates, supervising PhD students and promoting the University's academics and research to the public.

Professor Roberts says: 'This new professorship emphasises Birmingham's commitment to getting people engaged in and excited about science. Science is so important to our economy, to politics and

education, and I'm also keen to promote it as an integral part of our culture.'

Professor Roberts is an elected fellow of the British Science Association, and also makes regular appearances on programmes such as *Don't Die Young*, *The Incredible Human Journey* and *Origins of Us*. Her new documentary *Woolly Mammoth: Secrets of the Ice Age* aired in April. See Professor Roberts speaking about her new role at [www.youtube.com/user/unibirmingham](http://www.youtube.com/user/unibirmingham)



New professor: Alice Roberts in the Lapworth Museum

# Stonehenge secrets uncovered

A new discovery has significantly increased the evidence linking the ancient monument of Stonehenge to sun worship.

The breakthrough was made by a team led by archaeologists from Birmingham and Vienna, using the latest geophysical imaging techniques to uncover two huge pits positioned on celestial alignment at the site in Wiltshire.

These pits may have contained tall stones, wooden posts or even fires to mark the sun rising and setting and could have defined a processional route used to celebrate the passage of the sun across the sky at the summer solstice.

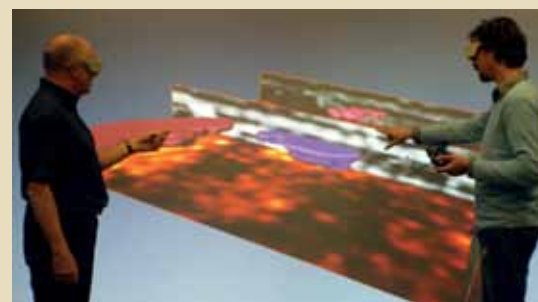
Professor Vince Gaffney, archaeologist and project leader from the IBM Visual and Spatial Technology Centre at the University of Birmingham, says: 'These exciting finds indicate that even though Stonehenge was ultimately the most important monument in the landscape, it may at times not have been the only, or most important, ritual focus and the area of Stonehenge may have become significant

as a sacred site at a much earlier date.'

The pits are just one of several discoveries made during the Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes Project, which began in summer 2010 as the world's biggest-ever virtual excavation to reveal and visually recreate the extraordinary prehistoric landscape surrounding Stonehenge.

Just ten days into the study the team attracted international media coverage when they found a second 'henge' just 1km away from the main Stonehenge monument.

From multi-user 3D touch tables to mobile phone apps, our Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub is using digital technologies to enhance learning experiences for everyone from academics to museum visitors. The high-tech hub was part funded by alumni; find out more about supporting Heritage, Culture and Sport at Birmingham on pages 8–11.



Virtual archaeology: Exploring one of the pits in 3D



Ancient monument: Stonehenge



**Royal approval:** Professors David Eastwood and Peter Fryer receive the award

## Queen's Prize marks sweet success

It comes in many forms, flavours and colours – as a snack on the go, a luxury treat or a soothing drink – but it's not often that chocolate leads the way to Buckingham Palace.

That's exactly where a party of students, industrial partners and staff from the Centre for Formulation Engineering found themselves when the Centre was awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for its pioneering research into the microstructure of materials such as chocolate, paints and washing detergents.

Professor Peter Fryer, Head of Chemical Engineering, says: 'Our work is about getting the molecule to do what it's meant to do at the right time, such as getting the stain remover to the fabric stain. Chocolate, for example, can be manufactured so that it melts in the mouth, and we've been working with Cadbury to develop the solidification of chocolate in moulds among other things.'

The Queen's Prize recognises outstanding contributions made by education for the nation's social, cultural and economic benefit.

Learn more about the Centre for Formulation Engineering at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/chemical-engineering](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/chemical-engineering)

# Creating a *first-rate* student experience

The University offers an exceptionally broad range of subjects for study, a world-renowned campus, and calls one of the UK's liveliest cities home, but what is Birmingham doing to remain an attractive proposition to potential students in the light of the tuition fee rise?

According to Professor Karen O'Brien, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, the University always aims to give students a first-rate experience, and activity in this area has rarely been so great.

Apart from the transformation of the Edgbaston campus, which will improve key learning and recreation facilities, there are many initiatives that focus on enhancing the quality, styles and spaces of teaching, as well as post-education opportunities.

Professor O'Brien says: 'We teach in many ways, including small groups that help students to learn and develop their independence. Our Entrepreneurship and Innovation team also encourages students to use their knowledge in entrepreneurial ways.'

'We boast an award-winning careers centre, can call upon our alumni community to share its knowledge, focus on internships and have recently invested £3.5 million in our employability strategy to help students make the transition from education to employment.'

### Learn more

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/careers.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/careers.aspx)



**Loving life at Birmingham:** Students outside the Guild



**Contact time:** Students have increased contact with staff

## DID YOU KNOW?

### The University is a charity

Find out more in *the Difference* and on pages 8–11





# Peter Pan *in the digital age*



Visionary: Michael Acton Smith

Michael Acton Smith (BSc Geography, 1996) is the creator of Moshi Monsters, the website used by 50 million children worldwide...

If you haven't heard of Moshi Monsters, ask any eight-year-old and they'll be able to fill you in. Dubbed 'Facebook for kids' the site allows children to design and adopt their own monster, share it with friends and receive access to secret areas in return for completing challenges.

**'I think I learnt as much from the non-academic side of University life as the academic.'**

Launched in 2007, the site is now used by half of British under-tens and that's just where it begins. With masses of merchandise and a music album, a live tour, mobile apps and international expansion, Moshi Monsters is set to rival Disney as a brand.

For Michael, CEO of Moshi Monsters' parent company Mind Candy, maintaining a child-like view on the world has been crucial to his brand's success.

'I'm very immature and very playful. So many people grow up and forget about childhood but staying young, creative and open-minded is a wonderful way to go through life,' he says. The entrepreneur believes his student days at Birmingham influenced his success because they gave him time to think and develop different business ideas.

'I joined lots of clubs, played a lot of football and met great friends in Chamberlain Hall. I loved a night called Club Tropicana in the Guild and going to the Dome nightclub on a Monday night. I think I learnt as much from the non-academic

side of University life as the academic. There was a balance,' he says. Birmingham was also where he met his business partner Tom Boardman (BSc Computer Science, 1996) at chess club and the pair set up the gifts and gadgets website Firebox straight after graduation, with the shot glass chess set they invented one drunken evening becoming a surprise hit.



Firebox continues trading to this day and Michael set up Mind Candy in 2004 inspired by his love of games (as a student he could often be found in the video games arcade at the Guild).

Moshi Monsters was born after the company's first project, an online global treasure hunt called Perplex City, did not go according to plan.

'Creatively it was amazing but commercially it was a bit of a disaster. We lost £5 million and it was a scary, awful time. We had about half a million in the bank and desperately needed to come up with a new idea,' Michael says.

'I was sitting in a coffee shop thinking about how much I liked Tamagotchi and Furby monsters as a child and I thought I'd quite like to create a little pet that kids could look after online. It took about 18 months to take off after we had done a lot of tinkering and adding new features but in summer 2009 we began to receive one registration per second.'

With Moshi Monsters in the ascendancy, Michael is enjoying the media furore and is excited to be building a new type of internet company.

'On the flip side we've got to be careful we don't get carried away by the hype and the attention and concentrate on building a great business. We want to grow into one of the most exciting entertainment companies in the world,' he says.

Visit Moshi Monsters at  
[www.moshimonsters.com](http://www.moshimonsters.com)

## Safety first

Mind Candy takes the safety of Moshi Monsters' users very seriously and employs a large monitoring team and software to check the contents of messages.

'Kids absolutely love the internet and this is the world they're growing up in,' Michael says. 'Most parents realise it's marvellous to allow children to play on a site deliberately designed for them where we look after their safety. It's like a walled garden.'

He also stressed the educational side of Moshi Monsters, with the challenges including games involving maths, English, languages and even his degree subject, Geography.



**Monkey business:** A parkour athlete mimics an orangutan's movements

## Monkeying around has benefits

Scientists at the University are using parkour athletes – also known as free runners – to discover how orangutans and other tree-dwelling primates maximise energy efficiency as they move through the forest.

The free runners will mimic the primates' movements on an assault course designed to replicate the way primates live, including commonplace practices such as 'tree swaying' and vertical climbing. The athletes' oxygen consumption will be measured to predict the primates' energy expenditure.

Dr Susannah Thorpe, Senior Lecturer in the School of Biosciences, says: 'Little is known about how animals move in complex habitats, such as a forest canopy, where compliant branches and canopy gaps pose energetic problems for tree-living species.'

'This study will be helpful within and outside of primate ecology,' she adds. 'Providing clues on habitat requirements for orangutans is important to conservation and reintroduction strategies and those studying human performance will be interested in the parkour athletes' energy usage.'

The NERC-funded study is a joint investigation between the universities of Birmingham and Roehampton.

Scan me to  
hear a podcast by  
Dr Susannah Thorpe



## Centre puts muscle into combating ageing



**If you think middle to old age is the perfect opportunity to start slowing down, think again. A new centre dedicated to the study of musculoskeletal ageing is planning to change your mind.**

The launch of a centre dedicated to reducing the pain and disability caused by musculoskeletal ageing will come as welcome news to the 10 million people in the UK living with conditions such as arthritis.

Researchers and health professionals from the universities of Birmingham and Nottingham will unite within the new UK Centre for Musculoskeletal Ageing Research, funded

by the Medical Research Council and Arthritis Research UK.

Their aim will be to understand how obesity, inflammation and hormones influence ageing in muscles and bones, and discover effective ways to prevent that process.

Professor Janet Lord, Director of the Centre, says: 'Relatively little is known about ageing, even though it's becoming such a major priority for society. We're hoping that our work will have a major impact on many people.'

The Centre is the result of five years of collaborative work between a number of areas of the University.



**Inspired to help:** Burkitt's Lymphoma researcher Kiran Bhatt in the lab

## Fighting cancer

A team of Birmingham academics are developing a new combination of drugs to fight Burkitt's Lymphoma, an aggressive cancer which accounts for half of all childhood cancers in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The first trials have had very exciting preliminary results. In every one of the 20 children tested, the disease growth was halted within a week and in 65% of cases the cancer had begun to regress.

Postdoctoral researcher Kiran Bhatt is part of the Burkitt's Lymphoma team: 'I am giving up my time to work on this project for free before continuing with my medical career because I passionately believe that this work is making a difference to children who really need my help,' she says.

Thanks to your generosity, we have already funded two treatment centres to reach more than 250 children with this life-threatening disease. You can help us to fund a third treatment centre by making a gift today. If another ten people gave just £50 each, a child could take part in this life-saving research. To make a gift, text CIRC03 plus your chosen amount to 70070.

Its areas of research will include:

- The role of inflammation, hormones and physical activity on musculoskeletal ageing. A virtual reality laboratory will be built using alumni funding to allow scientists to analyse the signals from brain to muscle as people move about in everyday settings.
- Interventions to improve musculoskeletal function.
- Helping people to make positive lifestyle changes.

**Learn more**

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/mds/centres/healthy-ageing](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/mds/centres/healthy-ageing)

# Final destination: LONDON

With the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics only months away, Great Britain's best athletes, many of them Birmingham alumni, are fine-tuning their preparations for the biggest competition of their sporting careers.

After winning a hard-fought silver medal at the IAAF World Championships in Daegu, middle distance runner Hannah England (BSc Biochemistry, 2009) has been catapulted into the media spotlight as a major medal hope at this year's Olympics, but she has not rested on her laurels in pursuit of glory.

**'If you want to be world-class you have to, quite literally, train at a world-class level...'**

'This year's gone well so far,' says Hannah, 'but there's so much more hard work to be done.' Since her gruelling training schedule began in October, Hannah has spent her time travelling to some of the best training venues in the world. This has included two trips to Kenya with further travelling to Florida and the French Pyrenees planned.

'If you want to be world-class you have to, quite literally, train at a world-class level; training at altitude will allow me to get that extra edge when I stand on the start line in London,' Hannah says.

'The pressure will be huge but it will be no more than the expectations I have of myself; I'm more excited than anything!'

Simon Mantell (BCom Commerce, 2007), an ever-present fixture in the Great Britain hockey team and Beijing Olympian will also take advantage of some warm weather training in South Africa. Along with fellow Birmingham alumnus James Fair (BSc Geology and Geography, 2003) and 24 other Team GB members he will travel to Stellenbosch for an intense training camp as the team look to improve on their fifth place finish at the Beijing games.

'We can't get complacent,' says Simon. 'We have some of the best support and management available, plus some fantastic sports science input; we need to make the most of it.'

Geography student Susie Gilbert is another hockey hopeful and with our alumni Olympians and the Jamaican Olympic team based at the University during the games, there will always be someone with a Birmingham connection to support.

After a list of alumni Olympians appeared in the *Birmingham Magazine*, several more of you contacted us to tell us about your involvement in London 2012. Your stories can be viewed online at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/news](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/news)



**Gruelling:** Hannah England (centre) training in Iten, Kenya

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Birmingham is planning to build a major new sports centre to develop our next generation of Olympic heroes and serve the local community.**

The building, which will include the city's only 50m swimming pool, is due to open in 2014. To discuss how you can support the new sports centre, contact Christian Burden on [c.j.burden@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.burden@bham.ac.uk) or +44(0)121 414 8204. Good luck to all of our athletes and behind the scenes team.



**Major development:** An artist's impression of the new sports centre



**High hopes:** Simon Mantell will be in South Africa with the Great Britain team in preparation for the London Olympics. Image: Treebyimages





# Circles of Influence the next phase

Circles of Influence, the University's innovative fundraising campaign, is entering its next phase. We would like to thank everyone who helped us raise our initial £60 million total and announce an ambitious new combined target for phase two of the campaign, £160 million.

Whether it helps transform our campus to meet 21st century students' needs, fund the best researchers to tackle global health problems, or ensure we attract the brightest students, irrespective of their circumstances, your support, combined with the University's investment, can help change lives at Birmingham and across the world.

Over the next four pages we have picked five projects to tell you more about. You can see a full list of Circles of Influence projects on page 9.

If you would like to support us, please make a gift.



UK taxpayers: remember to add 25% to your donation by responding to the reply you receive. We'd love to update you about the campaign's successes so please follow the web link and tick the 'keep in touch' boxes.

**Donation £5**  
Gift Aid £1.25  
Total £6.25

**Inspired?**  
Text CIRC02 £5 to 70070 to give £5 today

## FOCUS ON: AUTISM



Becky Heptinstall brought her son, Robin, to the University when he was three to help get him diagnosed as autistic so the family could access appropriate support. Our team also provided ten weeks of early intervention which greatly improved his ability to be socially interactive.

'My older son, Matthew, who is eight, has quite severe autism and when I started to think Robin was on the autistic spectrum as well I brought him to the University for an assessment.

'With a child like Robin who is quite high functioning and presenting many different characteristics, it can be difficult to get a diagnosis. On our first referral they didn't give him a diagnosis and I was quite annoyed about that, but it was good to have the University's support.

'When Robin first came to the University his play was very limited, literally opening and closing doors, banging the wall, putting things in one place and switching things on and off. He had no understanding of imaginative play and didn't really respond to body language or gestures.

'After the study the change in him was just amazing. The researchers helped him engage with activities with another person and he began copying actions, gestures and even some words and phrases.

'Our family lives in an autistic world but Robin's path in life is very different to my older son's. He was going to a mainstream school and I really wanted him to be able to interact with other children in a way they wouldn't find too strange. He is now functioning in that setting with some level of confidence and the University helped give him the skills he would need to be able to survive.

'When you're a parent of a child with autism your world is very different to that of other parents and I think a lot of parents find it lonely, emotional and very draining. I fully support the University's autism research because anything that can help develop a better understanding of the condition so that people are aware of what children on the autistic spectrum can achieve has got to be beneficial. We need to find ways to enable children, in their own way, to fit into society.'

### Inspired?

Our research will help to detect autism at an early stage and ensure children are properly supported at a point when they can benefit most. Your gift enables us to help more children like Robin have a better start in life.

Text AUTI plus your chosen amount to 70070 to give or contact Martha Cass on [m.cass@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.cass@bham.ac.uk) or +44 (0)121 414 6679 for further information.



A better start: Robin Heptinstall

**November 2009**  
The Circles of Influence campaign officially launches



**December 2009**  
Obesity researcher Dr Eliot Marston celebrates a year in post as Bupa Translational Research Manager



**January 2010**  
Significant donations from the Liz and Terry Bramall Charitable Trust and other leading supporters make the Bramall Music Building a reality



**April 2010**  
£53 million reached. Construction work starts on the Bramall Music Building





## FOCUS ON:

# CAMPAIGN PROJECTS

A full list of the new projects Circles of Influence is supporting.  
With your help we are...

### DEVELOPING A CAMPUS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY...

- **The University Library:** See page 11
- **The Barber Institute of Fine Arts:** Help us provide a world-class space for this world-class art collection by building a new exhibition gallery, new learning spaces and new, improved visitor facilities.
- **Sport:** As one of the top two universities in the UK for sport, we need a multi-functional sports centre that can serve everyone from elite athletes to students and the local community.
- **The Lapworth Museum of Geology:** Help restore the Grade II\* listed Lapworth Museum to its full Edwardian glory while at the same time embedding the latest technologies to greatly improve the visitor experience.

### FINDING SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE CRISES...

- **Global infection:** See page 10
- **Centre for Virtual Reality Learning and Rehabilitation:** There are more than a quarter of a million new cases of brain injury in the UK each year as a result of stroke or head trauma. This new centre will transform lives by ensuring once debilitating injuries and disorders can be overcome. See page 3.
- **Prostate and breast cancer:** More than 45,000 cases of breast cancer and 37,000 cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed in the UK each year. Help us find new ways to treat patients and improve their chances of recovery.

- **Food security:** Feeding an increasing population in the face of climate change and diminishing resources is one of the 21st century's major challenges. We plan to develop our international expertise in plant reproductive biology and plant physiology to address this.

### IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES...

- **Children's cancer:**  
Our children's brain cancer team are working to improve diagnosis and treatment of a dangerous and debilitating condition. We need staff and facilities to develop a national programme translating a new scanning technique into clinical practice across the UK and beyond.
- **Autism:** See page 8

### SUPPORTING THE BRIGHTEST STUDENTS...

- **Birmingham internships:** See page 10
- **Academic Enrichment Programme:**  
Working with Year 12 students throughout the region to encourage educational progress to university.
- **The Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme:** A sector-leading widening participation scheme providing financial support to talented but disadvantaged young people.
- **Cultural Internships:** Developing the cultural leaders of tomorrow and tackling the skills shortage in the cultural sector studying at Birmingham.



**Pedal power:** Professor Adam Tickell, the University's Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer, is completing a 128 mile bike ride for Circles of Influence. Visit [www.justgiving.com/Adam-Tickell](http://www.justgiving.com/Adam-Tickell) to sponsor him

### INVESTING IN EXCELLENCE...

- **Birmingham Fellowships:** See page 11
- **PhD students:** Attracting talented PhD students into our areas of research excellence.
- **Chamberlain Chairs:** Enabling prestigious appointments for world-leading researchers who have had a career of outstanding originality and impact.

### ENABLING INNOVATION...

Having the freedom to invest in creative and innovative ideas that have an immediate impact is crucial to a world-class university. More than 150 extraordinary projects totalling more than £2 million have been funded since 2002. With your support we can continue to improve our student experience to attract the best and brightest young people to study at Birmingham. See *the Difference*.

If you are interested in supporting or finding out more about any of these projects, please call Emma Hazlewood on +44 (0)121 414 7957 or [e.j.hazlewood@bham.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.hazlewood@bham.ac.uk)

Find out more about each project at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving)



## Which project will you support?

Text the code below followed by the amount you wish to give to 70070

**CIRC02** Enabling innovation  
**CIRC03** Improving children's lives  
**CIRC04** Developing campus

**CIRC05** Health and lifestyle  
**CIRC06** Student support  
**CIRC07** Investing in excellence

Summer 2010  
First A2B students graduate



May 2010  
The Centre for Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM) launches



November 2010  
After an incredible year of fundraising, we hit £57 million



February 2011  
Scientists funded by Circles of Influence make a major breakthrough in TB research





**Taking action:** Laura Piddock (centre) ready to present a petition outside 10 Downing Street

## FOCUS ON:

# Global infection

Described as one of the three greatest threats to human health by the World Health Organisation, antibiotic resistance is just one aspect of the University's global infection research.

Professor Laura Piddock, President of the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, leads the Antibiotic Action initiative and has been lobbying the British government and opposition party politicians to find solutions to the lack of discovery, research and development of new drugs.

'An estimated 25,000 people die each year in the European Union from antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections and many infections are due to multidrug resistant (MDR) Gram negative bacteria,' she says.

'Bacteria are able to share DNA and because of the frequent use of some antibiotics, resistance genes on the DNA spread very quickly. This means increasing numbers of bacteria such as E.coli are becoming MDR. These infect not just patients with serious medical conditions but ordinary people in the community.

'For example, a woman who develops a MDR bacterial urinary tract infection could develop a "bacteraemia" [the presence of bacteria in the blood], a life-threatening infection, for which there are limited choices for treatment.

'There have never been many drugs available to treat Gram negative bacteria and the reason for that is they have very good export mechanisms

— as soon as a drug gets in it is pumped out. In my lab we're trying to understand how we can turn that system off or inhibit it as a basis for new drug development.

### **'An estimated 25,000 people die each year in the European Union from antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections...'**

'The prudent use of antibiotics, called antibiotic stewardship, is another issue. Only now, in the 21st century do we understand the fundamental biology of antibiotic resistance and have started to put treatment strategies in place to minimise the risk. Furthermore, while we're waiting for new drugs to be developed, doctors and scientists are re-investigating older drugs and whether they can be used more strategically.'

Learn more about the Antibiotic Action initiative at [www.antibiotic-action.com](http://www.antibiotic-action.com)

#### **Inspired?**

Your gift could help academics like Laura develop new ways to address the crisis surrounding antibiotics and develop our research into Gram negative bacteria.



**New horizons:** Emma West takes in the view over Cape Town on her internship placement

## Focus on internships

Emma West, a 3rd year law student, completed an international placement in Cape Town, South Africa, with the help of the University's International Work Experience scheme.

Emma went out to Cape Town in summer 2011, initially working in a human rights office and later with young juveniles and male offenders, who had been involved in gangs.

'My internship has had a profound effect on my studying as well as my future career plans. The financial award of £800 allowed me to afford to go on this fantastic placement,' she says.

'As a result of my trip I have now decided that I don't want to be a solicitor or barrister any more and once I have finished my undergraduate degree, I'm going to do an MA in Social Work with the view to working with young offenders.

'I'd like to thank everyone who supported the scheme for allowing me to gain the insight and opportunity into experiencing what I now want to do with the rest of my life.'

#### **Inspired?**

You can help enhance our students' employability through giving towards placements like Emma's. The International Work Experience scheme is just one of several internship opportunities Circles of Influence is supporting.

Our inaugural Cultural Internships for recent graduates have been a huge success (see *the Difference*, page 3), while 2012 sees the launch of the Gateway Internship bursary to help students in priority groups (such as Access to Birmingham scheme participants) take up critical experiences they may otherwise not be able to afford.

#### **March 2011**

The Cadbury Research Library, the new home for Special Collections, officially opens



#### **May 2011**

38 projects that have an immediate impact on students' lives are funded



#### **September 2011**

The number of Access to Birmingham scholarship students supported by alumni exceeds 250



#### **November 2011**

£60 million target reached







**Modern:** What the proposed new library could look like



**Looking to the future:** Student Jo Goldhawk sees numerous benefits in the planned new library

## FOCUS ON: the library

We are planning a library fit for the 21st century to transform our Edgbaston campus. This technologically rich successor will be to the west of the present site and include a cultural gateway for promoting the University's collections. At the same time, we will create an extensively landscaped green space to provide an attractive and inspiring environment and a focus for future development.

Regular library user Jo Goldhawk (BA American and Canadian Studies, 2nd year) is excited about the prospect of a modern new library on campus.

'Working in the library free of distraction makes an enormous difference to me. In this high-tech age, I think it's really important for a library to have digital publications, enough plug points for laptops and the latest equipment for updating the catalogue and checking out hard copy books. Under the new fees regime students will want the best. More space for group work is another important feature of a modern library as students now complete joint projects regularly to enhance our employability skills.'

'The plans show an amazing new facility and I hope the new building will provide a light, beautiful space which will inspire people to work.'

### Inspired?

What facilities would your dream library include? Share your thoughts on our Twitter page or email [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) and let us know.

 [www.twitter.com/birminghamalumni](https://twitter.com/birminghamalumni)

## FOCUS ON: Birmingham Fellows and PhD students

Exploring the foundations of the universe is all in a day's work for Birmingham Fellow Kostas Nikolopoulos and PhD student Andy Chisholm, who are both physicists at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN).

Birmingham Fellow Kostas Nikolopoulos convenes a major analysis in the ATLAS experiment at the CERN laboratory in Geneva. He is searching for the Higgs boson, the only particle in the standard model of particle physics that has not been discovered yet, using proton-proton collision data recorded by the ATLAS detector at the CERN Large Hadron Collider.

'The Birmingham Fellowship Scheme is an excellent opportunity for researchers at a relatively early stage in their career to receive the support they need to continue performing cutting-edge research and establish themselves among their

peers as recognised leaders in their fields, while developing their teaching capacities in a staged and smooth manner,' he says.

'The University's firm commitment to invest in the development of future academics builds confidence for a long and fruitful relationship.'

PhD student Andy was part of the team at the centre of what is believed to be the first clear observation of a new particle at the Large Hadron Collider. The discovery moves us a step closer to understanding how the universe is held together.

'Being part of the research at CERN is one of the most exciting research opportunities in modern physics. It is not all that common that the research you contribute to will almost certainly re-write the textbooks for the next generation of physics students,' he says.



### Inspired?

Birmingham is committed to investing for the future and our PhD students and Birmingham Fellowships pay testimony to this.

Your gifts will help other academics like Andy and Kostas do amazing research across all disciplines.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Academics from 167 organisations from 37 countries around the world are working at CERN and a team from Birmingham Business School has been helping them exchange knowledge effectively.

### May 2012

The campaign's next phase officially launches, with an ambitious combined £160 million target



### Summer 2012

Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub set to open



### Autumn 2012

Bramall Music Building opening festival

# Pioneering international centre launches first research projects

Birmingham's new research centre in Guangzhou, China, has launched its first three biomedical projects.

The University entered a new era of partnership and opportunities when the centre opened in September 2011 and it is hoped these initial projects are the beginning of an exciting array of collaborative research across different disciplines.

The three projects are:

- **Guangzhou Biobank Cohort study:** This work examines the effects of genetic and environmental influences on health and chronic disease, particularly circulatory disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer and dementia, studying men and women from Guangzhou aged 50-plus.
- **Born in Guangzhou Birth Cohort study:** A collaborative study looking at the genetic, environmental and social factors that influence the health of mother and child. This will be one of the world's largest birth cohorts and will give valuable information to prevent and treat many illnesses.

- **Birmingham-Guangzhou Brain and Cognition Centre:** Research focuses on the long-term cognitive problems encountered by stroke patients, looking at affected parts of the brain and patients' related behaviour, to define new methods of rehabilitation.

This is the first foreign university partnership that the Government of Guangzhou Municipality has undertaken and Director Vivian Zheng believes the centre is progressing well.

Vivian says: 'We face challenges but they are part of a healthy process to ensure we get this partnership right. We are committed to a long-term partnership with Guangzhou. Apart from initiating further research projects in environment and engineering, we are working on education collaboration in Guangzhou, and are identifying prospective partners to assist with these plans, which include development of an International Student Centre.'

## Building solid foundations

From September 2012, high-performing international students can study a foundation programme at Birmingham before they begin their undergraduate degrees.

Students at the Birmingham Foundation Academy will be fully integrated members of the University community, taught entirely by the University's academic staff on its main campus.

Dr Steve Minchin, Academic Director of the Birmingham Foundation Academy, says: 'Academy students will benefit from the inspirational University of Birmingham experience and be fully supported as they adjust to a new and exciting student lifestyle.'

The deadline for applications for September 2012 entry is Monday 20 August 2012.

For further information, visit:  
[www.birmingham.ac.uk/foundation-academy](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/foundation-academy)





# Iron athlete's *new direction*



Record-breaker: Chrissie competing at the Hawaii World Ironman Championships in 2011. Pictures: Larry Maurer

As her new autobiography hits the bookstores, multiple Ironman world champion Chrissie Wellington is taking a break from sport.

Where does an athlete who has reached the peak of their profession turn when they need a new challenge? For Chrissie Wellington (BSc Geography, 1998), the answer was in writing. She believes *A Life Without Limits* filled an intellectual and emotional void in her life.

'I also wanted to inspire others to pursue their dreams,' she says. 'The book is a vehicle for this and hopefully through reading about some of my life lessons people can be encouraged to take a chance and live life without limits themselves.'

Chrissie admits that she had to 'humanise' herself to tell her story, revealing many of her strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. 'The reader can expect honesty, as there are things in the book which people may not know about me. Only by revealing my true nature could I hope to inspire,' she says.

After leaving her desk in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to turn professional in 2007, Chrissie rocketed to the forefront of women's triathlon. She won the first of four World Ironman titles later that year, the most recent being in October 2011.

To add to her remarkable list of accomplishments she is also the current Ironman women's world record holder, which she set in February 2011, with only four men finishing ahead of her in the race.

Despite this continued success, Chrissie has decided to take a break from training and competing professionally to 'explore different opportunities'. Her work at DEFRA helped influence international development, another of her passions, and during the break from sport she aims to continue her development and charity work.

'The decision to take a break was a hard-thought one and took a lot of deliberating,' says Chrissie.

'I've enjoyed every second of triathlon but I felt I needed to inject some variety back in my life, some balance and some spontaneity. After all, racing cannot always be the axis around which my life revolves.'

'It's important to remember that the world is our oyster and I am really looking forward to seeing what is possible.'

## Win Chrissie's autobiography

For your chance to win one of five copies of *A Life Without Limits*, answer the following question:

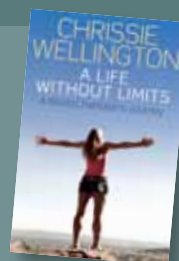
**Where did Chrissie Wellington work before she became a professional athlete?**

Entries should be emailed to [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) or sent to Alumni Office, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham,

B15 2TT, England by 31 August 2012.

Please mark your email or envelope 'Chrissie Wellington Competition' and remember to include your name, address, contact telephone number, subject, and year of graduation.

Terms and conditions apply.



## The Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association

As members of the Guild of Graduates Alumni Association (GGAA), all alumni are invited to an Annual Forum on campus on Saturday 8 September.

The theme for the day will be the Olympics and Director of Sport Zena Wooldridge has agreed to give a talk on the University's role in the Olympic games.

GGAA president John Craggs says: 'The day will incorporate a quick AGM to transact any official business but we want it to be an exciting event covering much more than just an AGM.'

Talks and visits are being arranged and lunch will be provided (cost TBC). For further information, visit the Guild's website at [www.bhamalumni.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=494](http://www.bhamalumni.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=494) or contact group secretary Peter Borchers on [p.h.borchers@bham.ac.uk](mailto:p.h.borchers@bham.ac.uk)

## Pioneering playwriting

Birmingham's pioneering Masters programme in playwriting has been described as the best in the country by *The Times* newspaper. Fraser Grace (MA Playwriting Studies, 1992; MPhil Playwriting Studies, 1997) has been appointed as the new playwright-in-charge of the course.

## Maths whiz

Congratulations to Mathematics Reader Dr Jon Bennett, who has been awarded a London Mathematical Society Whitehead Prize, one of the most prestigious mathematical prizes in the world.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**You can fundraise for Birmingham by holding a bake sale, running a half marathon or wearing jeans to the office.**

To request a fundraising pack, contact Laura Clark on +44 (0)121 414 8894 or email [l.clark.1@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.clark.1@bham.ac.uk)



## School plans

The University is planning to open a new free school for 11- to 18-year-olds in September 2014.

If approved, the University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form will be a mixed ability, co-educational state school for 150 pupils aged 11–16 plus 200 sixth formers. It will focus on academic rather than vocational subjects in order to prepare pupils for selective universities.

The school will also be a teacher training centre with close links to the University's School of Education, which has been rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

Learn more at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/community/university-school](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/community/university-school)

## Drama on campus

A major new BBC drama features scenes shot at the University of Birmingham. Written and directed by award-winning filmmaker Stephen Poliakoff, the 1930s-set *Dancing On The Edge* follows a black jazz band in London. Famous names among the cast include Chiwetel Ejiofor, Matthew Goode (BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1999), Caroline Quentin and Anthony Head.

## Birmingham prepares

Birmingham is preparing for a major assessment of its research impact in 2014. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. For further information, visit [www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref)

## Buzz online

*Buzz*, the University's staff newsletter, is now available to read online at [www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/buzz](http://www.newscentre.bham.ac.uk/buzz)

## Tweet us

Follow our new alumni Twitter feed for the latest news, views and events from Birmingham and your alumni community. Visit [www.twitter.com/birminghamalumni](http://www.twitter.com/birminghamalumni)

## Apology

A grammatical error on page 9 of *The Birmingham Magazine* November 2011 meant a Mosque and a Sikh Temple in the second city were accidentally confused. We would like to apologise to the Green Lane Masjid in Small Heath and Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick, for the mistake.

# Back TO THE FUTURE

Sky-high allotments and self-sufficient eco-villages are just two of our future urban landscapes, according to a University research programme.



**Green living:** Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED), Hackbridge, London, a well-known example of local sourcing of construction materials to reduce carbon footprint. Picture: Tom Chance, licensed under Creative Commons

With growing populations, limited resources and an increasing trend towards urban migration, tomorrow's cities must be designed to take the strain.

The four-year Urban Futures programme has been looking ahead to 2050 to study the effectiveness of existing engineering solutions against four extreme yet plausible scenarios.

The first scenario envisaged sustainable urban villages, producing their own water and energy; the second a fortress world of stark economic division, with the rich living in gated and guarded communities.

The third future involved policy reform, with government imposing strong policies to benefit society; and the fourth, entitled 'market forces', showed cities as they are now, with development happening when it can be afforded.

Funded by a £3.2 million award from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the multi-faceted

project was led by Professor Chris Rogers, from Birmingham's School of Civil Engineering, and included researchers from Exeter, Lancaster, Birmingham City and Coventry universities.

Researchers were able to make projections against these future scenarios and apply their theories to a Lancaster-based project to regenerate a piece of land once used for industrial purposes.

Professor Rogers says: 'I'm delighted with the results of the programme. I strongly believe our methodology will change the way practitioners think when looking at making long-term engineering investments.'

An Urban Futures practitioner guide, *Designing Resilient Cities: A Guide to Good Practice*, was launched to opinion leaders and practitioners during an event held in Westminster Church Hall on 18 April.

**Learn more**  
[www.urban-futures.org](http://www.urban-futures.org)



# Sharks could provide clues to the histories of seas

**Sea life centre sharks could be the key to revealing the mysteries of ancient seas, believe Birmingham academics.**

The research claims that sharks' teeth hold information which could enlighten us on climatic impact on oceans.

Dr Ivan Sansom, Senior Lecturer in Palaeobiology at the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, is leading a team studying teeth being collected from the bottom of tanks in Sea Life Centres across the UK.

The theory is that levels of oxygen held within the teeth can highlight the temperature of the seawater the shark lives in. The research is yet

to determine whether this applies to all sharks or just certain types.

'This research will validate the study of age-old fossil shark teeth as a technique to learn more about sea conditions in prehistoric times,' Dr Sansom says.

Other work in the field has suggested that cooling waters were a factor in driving major evolutionary changes while warming waters led to extinctions.

'With the current evidence for warming oceans, the evidence from the past suggests we are going to see a major extinction in our oceans,' Dr Sansom says.



**Snappy:** Sharks' teeth could provide vital information about climate change

'Reconstructing past climate systems using evidence such as that we hope to find in shark teeth may help us understand what happened in the past, and what may happen in the future.' Undertaken as part of the EU-funded project: Vertebrae Isotopes and the Environment (VISE) and funded by the Marie Curie Fellowship scheme, the research will take two years to complete.

## My mentor and I

Drama and English student Nathan Crossan-Smith, one of the first participants in our Alumni Leadership Mentoring Programme, is being mentored by Arts Council Chief Executive Alan Davey (BA English, 1982; Hon DLitt, 2011). While Alan has helped budding theatre director Nathan make contacts and plan his future, Nathan has introduced Alan to hip hop. Below they tell their story.



### Nathan

Being Alan's mentee has added a new dimension to my final year. Our meetings often follow the same structure, we have a formal discussion then we meet up later on to have a meal and see a show.

I think that if we purely discussed my career it would be quite limiting and our broader conversations about the arts have been incredibly interesting for me. While I've been telling Alan about my dissertation on hip hop lyrics, he's introduced me to a wide range of fantastic art, from the 18th century German playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing through to contemporary Canadian folk via the composer Wagner.

Through Alan I've been introduced to the network of theatres in London and made contacts including David Lan, who runs the Young Vic. Before I would have been quite overwhelmed but I've grown in confidence and have realised there are people out there looking for the next generation of talent.

Meeting Alan and everyone around him I know that, not only are they at the top of their game, they care deeply about what they do. Clearly the arts are in good hands.

### Alan

I hope I can be of some help to Nathan as he decides what his next move is. If I'd had a mentor when I was in Nathan's position, who knows what I could have ended up doing. When you're in your last year at university thinking about the future can be unsettling and to give someone access to objective advice about what might be possible is really important.

The programme has benefited me because it's put me in touch with someone at Birmingham. I'm still interested in my subject because the arts are my life. Nathan's introduced me to new forms of culture that I didn't know enough about. He's shown me how to create a Spotify playlist, opened my eyes to the poetics of hip hop (the link to many oral traditions is striking) and I've introduced him to classical music and some interesting theatre directors.

I would definitely recommend being a mentor. It's not an onerous commitment. I've got an awful lot out of knowing and hopefully helping Nathan.

If you are interested in becoming an alumni mentor, contact Volunteer Relationship Manager Kerrie Holland on [k.holland@bham.ac.uk](mailto:k.holland@bham.ac.uk) or +44 (0) 121 414 4139.

# Birthday bonanza

Several of the University's departments and schools are celebrating considerable milestones in 2012. Below we take a look at them with several pictures for you to enjoy. Update your contact details on [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk) to make sure you receive details about upcoming anniversaries.

## Shakespeare Institute

60th anniversary

### Did you know?

Royal Shakespeare Company actor and playwright Tim Crouch is the child of parents who met at the Shakespeare Institute in the 1950s.

### Events

A series of talks were held by past and present staff and scholars on November 12. An alumni celebration was held in May 2012.



**Famous faces:** Former Director Stanley Wells socialising with actresses Judi Dench, Polly James and others at a Shakespeare Institute event in 1971



**Happy birthday:** Institute Director Michael Dobson (centre) with Stanley Wells (far right) and guests at the 60th anniversary celebration



**25 years of success:** The first graduating class of the Birmingham MBA in 1986



**Recent times:** MBA alumni enjoying the 2009 summer ball at the Botanical Gardens

## The Birmingham MBA

25th anniversary

### Did you know?

The Birmingham MBA has been listed in the top 100 globally by the *Financial Times*, *The Economist* and the *Expansion* MBA ranking surveys. Earlier this year *The Financial Times* ranked it 86th in the world and 11th in the United Kingdom.

### Events

To celebrate this milestone the Birmingham Business School held a reunion weekend in June 2011, with a MBA ball at Winterbourne Botanical Gardens attracting alumni from all over the world.



## The Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) 45th anniversary

### Did you know?

INLOGOV began as a ten-week course for local government senior staff in 1967, with the support of the local authority associations. From here a range of activities, seminars and research, both graduate and undergraduate, grew with the belief that local government, councillors and academics can learn from a close interaction with each other.

### Events

INLOGOV held an anniversary lecture delivered by Sir Michael Lyons, former Chairman of the BBC Trust, former CEO of Birmingham, Nottinghamshire and Wolverhampton Councils and also former Director of INLOGOV.



**Celebrating 45 years:** Former Director John Stewart with his wife Theresa and others at last year's anniversary celebrations



**Early days:** Staff members from INLOGOV in 1977

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts is also celebrating its 80th Anniversary on 13 December 2012. This will mark the beginning of year long celebrations of the gallery and concert hall, with many exhibitions and concerts taking place. The anniversary will also act as a launch-pad for the major redevelopment of the Barber (see page 9).



**A look back:** Oil rigs on campus in the 1910s

## Chemical Engineering 100 years of oil degree programmes

### Did you know?

The appointment of John Cadman as professor of mining in 1908, a serving Government Inspector of mines, was significant in the beginnings of oil degree programmes. From 1911 the first students entered the mining department to study oil mining alongside coal mining with oil field drilling rigs installed on campus in 1913.

### Events

A celebratory event 'From Oil Mining to Buckingham Palace – 100 years of Chemical Engineering' is planned on 14 September. The event will be an opportunity for alumni and past staff to come onto campus and reminisce. For further details, please contact Vickie Pargetter on [v.a.pargetter@bham.ac.uk](mailto:v.a.pargetter@bham.ac.uk)



**Memories:** Sohail Saqlain (MSocSc Health Management for Developing Countries, 1991) with other former researchers and fellows of the HSMC

## Health Services Management Centre 40th anniversary

### Did you know?

The centre has helped influence NHS policy over the past four decades. For example, HSMC's research into the costs and future reform of adult social care was commissioned by the Department of Health and Downing Street, and launched by the Prime Minister.

### Events

To mark the occasion NHS Chief Executive Sir David Nicholson gave the annual health policy lecture. HSMC will also be hosting a summer barbecue. For further details, please contact Ann Thomas on [a.d.thomas@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.d.thomas@bham.ac.uk)

**Spotted yourself in one of our pictures?**  
Email [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) and let us know!

## Your news

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 through the methods listed on page 2. We will print as many updates as we can on these pages.

### 1950s

**Mollie Hardy** (BSc Zoology, 1954)

I remember the very happy undergraduate years; meeting my husband and later seeing our own son receive his first-class degree from Birmingham.

**John Reckless** (MBChB Medicine, 1954)

My life after Birmingham has been idyllic, working as a tenured professor and later a solo physician in private practice in Durham, North Carolina, USA. I would love to hear from any of my colleagues from the Class of 1954.

**MV Subbiah** (Mechanical Engineering, 1958; Hon DU, 2011)

Subbiah, the former Chairman of the Murugappa Group and Chairman of National Skill Development Corporation, was conferred the prestigious Padma Bhushan award for service of high order in the field 'Trade and Industry'. The award was announced in the Republic Day Honours List 2012 on 26 January.

**Hazel How**

(BSc Applied/Pure science, 1959)

I am a mathematics and IT teacher, most of my teaching is at Dame Alice School in Bedford where I was deputy head. Immediate past chairman of NADFAS, still play competitive tennis.

### 1960s

**Christopher Hazledine**  
(MBChB Medicine, 1960)

Settled in Ballarat in 1968, my main work being general practice and paediatrics, but also had time serving the Royal Flying Doctor Service out of Alice Springs, and Medical Officer of Health for Wendouree Shire. Family holidays, outback camping, amateur radio (VK3 CFH), and learning to fly filled my free time, and my arthritic fingers are kept mobile on my piano. Before hanging up my stethoscope at 65 I worked for Queensland

Health in remote and rural areas, thus finishing a very satisfying career, as I started with similar work in Gippsland 1963–66. Happy to hear from visitors!

**Hazel Malpass née Sawers**  
(BSc Chemistry 1960)

I became involved in Artistic Gymnastics in 1970, in due course I became an accredited coach and then a judge. Following many courses and exams I became an International Brevet Judge and was the UK Judge at several European, Commonwealth and World Championships, culminating in being the UK Judge at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. It would be interesting to hear from other Birmingham alumni who have officiated or volunteered at a high level in sport.

### 1970s

**Professor Mervyn Miles** (BSc Physics, 1970; MSc Physics, 1971; PhD Physics, 1974)

Mervyn became an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow in Saarbruecken, Germany before working in CWRU in Cleveland, and the Institute of Food Research in Norwich. Mervyn is now Professor of Physics and Head of the Nanophysics Group at Bristol and Director of the Centre for Nanoscience and Quantum Information. In 2001, he co-founded Infinitesima, which develops advanced atomic force microscopes. In 2011, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

**Om Sharma**

(PhD Mechanical Engineering, 1975)

I am a Senior Fellow at the United Technologies Research Center in the US and am delighted to have recently been elected to the very prestigious Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE). The role of CASE is to provide information and advice about science and technology to the government, industry and people of Connecticut while also encouraging an interest in science, engineering and technology in young people.



**Alan Stephenson**

(BSc Metallurgy Engineering, 1978)

I was always a regular at the University bridge club and in 2011 I was non-playing captain for the Welsh team that won the 2011 Camrose Trophy for the first time ever (in 70 years).



**John Wallace** (MSc Clinical Psychology, 1977)

Having qualified as a clinical psychologist, I practiced for five years before resitting A levels in required science subjects and entering medical school. I worked as a psychologist while a medical student and once qualified, went on to carry out research at the Maudsley Hospital in London. I am currently finishing a PhD at Oxford University looking at ways the different disciplines, such as medicine and psychology, can improve patient care. While it all sounds very serious, it has also been very enjoyable.

### 1980s

**Janet W Davis** (BCom Industrial Economics and Business Studies, 1982)

No kids, no husband – no complaints! It allows plenty of time for dancing (including teaching it), skiing, windsurfing, golf etc. Blew a sensible corporate career to spend a few years as a ski instructor in the Alps, then came back to the UK and renovated an old cottage in Surrey. Ten years ago, fell into a great job training senior managers who work internationally so I still travel a fair bit. Email me and say hello – I'd love to hear from you!

### Sally-Anne Hunter (LLB Law, 1986)

I trained as a barrister then as a professional fundraiser. I recently founded the Commando Spirit Appeal in support of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund, which aims to raise £1 million to help Royal Marines and their families in need.

### Julie Hopkins

(BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1982)

I work full-time during term times as a counsellor, at the student counselling centre at the University of Leeds. Living in Leeds since 1985, and enjoying the Yorkshire countryside at every available opportunity. I also make it a habit to visit Greece at least once a year. Would love to hear from anyone who remembers me!

### Ruth Hellier-Tinoco (Music, Drama, Dance, 1983) (PhD: Birmingham Conservatoire)

I am a Professor in the Departments of Music and Theater and Dance at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Before returning to academia I had a successful career as a professional actress, singer, and puppeteer; and was also Head of Music in two Birmingham secondary schools; and a community arts facilitator.

### Andrew McQueen (BSc Plant Biology, 1986)

Emigrating to Prince Edward Island in 2012.

## 1990s

### Patience Nyakanda (MPhil Plant Breeding and Crop Improvement, 1992)

I was involved with the formation of the University of Zimbabwe Alumni of Crop Science (UZACS) which, created in 2009, aims to provide a link between the University of Zimbabwe Crop science department, its alumni as well as the industry.

### Jagvinder Kang (BSc Computer Science and Software Engineering, 1994; Occ Sp Law, 1995)

Technology Law Alliance, the law firm I co-founded, has been independently ranked by premier legal directory Legal 500 as one of the top technology law practices in the UK. I was also recognised in the directory's Elite Leading Lawyers List. I believe I am the first Sikh technology lawyer to claim these accolades.



### Victoria Hirst (nee Ricketts) (BEng BCom Manufacturing Engineering and Commerce, 1997)

Lauren Amelia Hirst was born to Victoria and her husband Alexander on 22 October 2011.



### Jean-Francois Mouhot (Occ UG History, 1998)

I am now working in the Department of History at Georgetown University. My opinion piece on the similarities in the way we use fossil fuels today and the way past societies used slaves was published in *the Guardian* newspaper in February.

## 2000s

### David Walker (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2000)

David is currently Year 6 teacher and sports co-ordinator at Upton Primary School. In November 2011 Upton was named National Primary School of the year for the school that most values sport at the Aviva and Daily Telegraph School Sports Matters Awards. Of the 507 pupils at the school, 429 of them are members of a sports team.



### Dr Helge F Jani (MA European Studies, 2003; PhD German Studies, 2008)

My time in Birmingham was followed by an interlude in Zurich where I worked for a private bank. I've since returned to Hamburg and worked for a philanthropic organisation. I am currently busy with business estate development.

### Tom Martin (MEng Mechanical Engineering, Manufacturing and Management, 2004) and Charlotte Spelzini (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2004)

Our courtship started when we met in our final year at University when I was the University football first team captain, and Charlotte was in the three-time BUSA championship-winning netball team. We were both previously Club Captains, and Charlotte was a sports scholar. For many years the two sports had run annual three-legged pub crawls. Who'd have thought it would end up with marriage!!



### Tom Elsey (BA Political Science, 2006)

Tom won the DLA award – one of the major law student awards in the country. The award is given to the student who obtains the highest combined mark in the Business and Commercial Law parts of the Legal Practice Course at The College of Law in Birmingham.

### Artur Papyan (Short Course International Development, 2007)

I am the website editor for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Armenian service website ([www.azatutyun.am](http://www.azatutyun.am)) and am a freelance media and IT consultant and trainer, based in Yerevan, Armenia.

### Michael Jacobs (BA English, 2008)

Converted from English to Law; now a trainee solicitor at Herbert Smith in London. But I still get a kick out of the same stuff – reading complex language and giving my thoughts on what it means.

### Sarah Maynard

(BSc Environmental Science, 2011)

Having studied a number of natural hazards modules during my course and writing a dissertation on the Haiti and Chile earthquakes, my vision of working with natural hazards has been confirmed, especially the disaster response aspect of it. To gain experience, I am currently volunteering at the Disaster Emergency Committee in London and have also been accepted on to the British Red Cross' Disaster Response Challenge.



# Events

Get together with friends and classmates, network with fellow professionals or simply come along for a free drink. To find out more about any of our events, or for help organising your own reunion, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events), email [alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk) or call Anne-Marie Vassiliadis on +44 (0)121 414 8904. Event invitations are usually sent by email – update your details at [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk) to ensure you don't miss out!

**I ♥ UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**  
[www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni)

## June

### Anniversary Reunions for the Classes of 1987, 1977, 1972, 1967, 1962 and the pre-1962 Golden classes, Saturday 9 June

Join your classmates back on campus for a day of reunion activities, including a chance to visit your former school, take a tour of campus and catch up with friends. Visit our events webpage for more details.

### Alumni Sports Day, Saturday 9 June

Catch up on campus, play with your old team mates, compete against current students and become an alumni champion in one of 15 different sports tournaments across campus. Tickets are £15 and include tournament entry, one free drink at Raising the Bar (selected drinks only) and a Fab ticket. Please book before 1 June 2012.

### Community Day, Sunday 10 June

Come back to campus for a day of family fun! Get involved with the University's research, discover our wealth of cultural collections and find out about the various ways we are involved with the local community.

## July

### 1997 MBChB 15-year Reunion, Saturday 7 July

Join your 1997 Medicine classmates to celebrate your 15th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

### Ironbridge Alumni Family Day, Sunday 15 July

Join fellow Ironbridge Institute alumni to enjoy exclusive use of the Blists Hill Victorian Town for an evening reception with the Odd-socks Theatre Company, performing *Julius Caesar*.

### Olympic Pub Night, July

Join fellow alumni in the capital for an after-work drink on us! Details to be confirmed.

## September

### Music Reunion at the Bramall Music Building, Saturday 29 September

Join fellow Music alumni for a special reunion in the new Bramall Music Building on campus. Catch up with friends while you explore the new building together.

### 1962 MBChB 50-year Reunion, 29–30 September

Join your fellow 1962 Medicine classmates to celebrate your 50th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

## October

### 1957 MBChB 55-year Reunion, Saturday 6 October

Join your fellow 1957 Medicine classmates to celebrate your 55th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

### 1982 Dentistry 30-year Reunion, Friday 12 October

Join your fellow 1982 Dentistry classmates to celebrate your 30th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

### 1982 MBChB 30-year Reunion, Friday 12 October

Join your fellow 1982 Medicine classmates to celebrate your 30th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

## November

### House of Lords Reception, Friday 16 November, 6.30–8.30pm

Tickets for the ninth annual reception at the House of Lords will be available to book online in August. All alumni in the UK will receive an email notification – update your details at [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk) to ensure we have the correct details for you.

## December

### London Christmas Party, December

Join fellow alumni in the capital for a festive after-work drink on us! Details to be confirmed.

### Festive Drinks at the Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market, December

Come along for a beer, Glühwein or hot chocolate at the ever-popular Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market in the city centre.