

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

alumni news

Spring
2013

Rowing for gold

How one alumna became
the best in the world



Inside: £60 million investment for world-leading research centre; Library opens new chapter on campus; Everything changes as bestselling author shines



Circles of influence campaign

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



THE FIRST WORD

It is with your generous and continued support that we are enhancing our reputation as a leading global institution and I am pleased to be able to share our outstanding achievements with you.

At the start of the academic year we saw a significant improvement in our National Student Survey results, rising eight places in the table. We also climbed 12 places to 13th in the *Sunday Times University Guide 2013*, and were recently ranked sixth in the UK for graduate employability by *The International Herald Tribune*. You can read more about all of these successes throughout this publication.

You will also find within a round-up of news from across the University and our alumni community. You will discover more about our pioneering environmental genomics research, our groundbreaking new partnership with Rolls-Royce, and our recent success in more than doubling our research grant income in perhaps the most competitive environment ever experienced in higher education; these are exciting times for your great university.

This time last year we launched phase two of our £160 million *Circles of influence* fundraising campaign and, 12 months on,

it continues to go from strength to strength raising more than £115 million so far. Your support, together with our investment, is helping us to change lives for the better, and I hope you feel as proud as I do to be a part of that. You can read more about the impact of your gifts on our students, alumni, staff, and our local and national communities in *the Difference*.

We are flourishing and I would like to thank you again for your continued support. Every gift, whether time or money, makes a real difference. If you would like to make a donation, hold a fundraising event or volunteer your time, we would be delighted to hear from you. The University is strong, but together with your backing we are stronger still.

Best wishes

Professor David Eastwood
Vice-Chancellor and Donor

Stop Press

We are delighted to announce Professor Adam Tickell, current Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer, has been appointed as Provost and Vice-Principal in succession to Professor Michael Sheppard who retires from the University in September.



2012 Magazine competition winners

Congratulations to the winners of the 2012 *Birmingham Magazine* competitions.

Professor Martin Eayrs (BA English, 1971) received copies of all five of Mark Billingham's recommended books featured in the magazine and a copy of this year's Great Read at Birmingham, *Chocolate Wars*.

Crossword competition winner Ann Aldred (BSc Chemistry, 1978; PGCE Education, 1979) and Sudoku puzzle winner Jane Moore (BSc Mathematics, 1973) both won University merchandise.

Keep in touch with your university

With your news, memories and feedback, contact:

Rebecca Kilcullen, Alumni Communications Manager and Amy Cory, Alumni Communications Officer via alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk or +44 (0)121 414 4002 or +44 (0)121 414 2789

Update your details or share your news online at: www.your.bham.ac.uk
Or network with us on:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/birminghamalumni
LinkedIn – search for the 'University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends' group
Twitter – follow @birminghamalum
YouTube – watch our videos at www.youtube.com/user/unibirmingham

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Pushing science frontiers

University's leading role at CERN continues to transform understanding of the universe.



BREAKTHROUGH: The world's press gather to hear an update from CERN scientists on their search for the Higgs boson

Revolutionising understanding of our universe, Birmingham is in a unique position as the only UK university carrying out research in three experiments at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN, the world's biggest particle physics laboratory.

Birmingham's central role is characterised by Professor of Particle Physics, David Charlton (PhD Physics, 1989), who has been appointed the new Spokesperson for the ATLAS (A Toroidal LHC Apparatus) experiment which recently observed the much sought-after Higgs boson particle. This is the final missing ingredient in the Standard Model of particle physics which describes the fundamental particles that make up the universe.

Complementing this work on ATLAS, Dr Nigel Watson, School of Physics and Astronomy, is leading Birmingham's work on the LHCb (LHC beauty) experiment, observing minute differences in matter and anti-matter to explain how the universe was formed.

Professor David Evans, Professor in High Energy Physics, is also leading the UK groups on ALICE (A Large Ion Collider Experiment) which is exploring ultra-high energy densities to recreate the conditions of the Big Bang itself.

Learn more
www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/physics



Shakespeare Institute attracts special guests

Famous faces welcomed to the University's Shakespeare Institute in Stratford this past year include award-winning actress Meera Syal (Hon DLitt, 2003), China's most popular chat show host Lu Yu (pictured above), and *University Challenge* host Jeremy Paxman (pictured above with Professor Michael Dobson, Director of the Shakespeare Institute), who visited the Institute while filming a documentary on British novelist Marie Corelli.

Learn more
www.birmingham.ac.uk/shakespeare

Smart phone or fortune teller?

Have you ever wondered where you'll be in 24 hours' time? Soon your smart phone could tell you, thanks to new research from the University's School of Computer Science.

Researchers have devised an algorithm which captures your movement habits and those of your friends to predict, down to 20 metres, where you will be 24 hours later.

'We have shown that the accuracy of the prediction of an individual's future locations could be improved using previous movement and the mobility information of their social groups,' says project lead Dr Mirco Musolesi.

PhD students Antonio Lima and Manlio De Domenico also worked on the project. Antonio

explains: 'For example, friends John and Emily usually have lunch together at a Chinese restaurant close to John's office. Sometimes, though, they go a little farther to a nice Italian restaurant. When Emily is heading to the Italian place, this algorithm uses this information to predict that John is very likely to go there soon as well.'

This research, winner of the 2012 Nokia Mobile Data Open Challenge, could prove an invaluable resource not only for retailers and advertisers, but also to help law enforcement officers predict future locations of criminal events.

Learn more
www.cs.bham.ac.uk



Turning the tables on the competition

An impressive 12-place rise saw Birmingham named 13th best overall university in the UK by the *Sunday Times University Guide 2013*. The University was particularly recognised for its impressive graduate employment with 86.5% of its students in graduate-level work within six months of graduating, higher than both Oxford (80.8%) and Durham (84.5%).

This achievement follows a 3% increase in the University's satisfaction score in the 2012 National Student Survey (NSS), placing it significantly above the national average with a score of 88%, and resulting in an eight-place climb on the leader board.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Eastwood said: 'I am delighted with our performance. We have clear plans and an unwavering ambition to be an exceptional university in which to study, and we now need to build on these successes to ensure we offer our students the very best experience.'

The International Herald Tribune also recently ranked the University sixth in the UK and 60th globally for its employability offering. Alumni play a huge part in enhancing graduate employability and you can read more about this on page 6 in *the Difference*.

Chemical wealth impacts global health

New institute aims to improve health worldwide by studying the ways in which chemicals interact with genes to imbalance health and ecosystems.

More than 80,000 chemicals used by manufacturers of consumer goods are currently released into the environment, yet only around 7% have ever been tested for their potential health effects to humans and ecosystems.

The need for greater understanding of chemical damage to human health and ecosystems is the driving force behind the developing Environmental Systems Biology Institute at Birmingham; an interdisciplinary state-of-the-art laboratory funded by a £2 million investment.

This emerging field – known as environmental genomics – explores the link between the environment and disease by studying the impact of environmental changes on an organism's genes.

'Potentially, we are all being poisoned and we don't even know about it,' explains Professor John Colbourne, Chair of Environmental Genomics. 'If we can detect problems in the environment caused by these synthetic chemicals before they are realised, we will be able to counter the threats and mitigate the consequences.'

The research will examine the DNA of *Daphnia* (the common water flea), found in all freshwater areas across the globe, and determine how it is being affected by environmental factors and chemicals.

'The environment can significantly alter the way genes function, increasing susceptibility to disease,' says Professor Colbourne. 'This is just one reason that there is now a great demand by regulatory authorities and industries for new technologies to quickly, cheaply and effectively measure the possible toxicities of these chemicals.'

Learn more
www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/biosciences



CHOSEN ONE: The sequenced *Daphnia* used to determine environmental health

© Dr Christian Laforsch, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Reaching out to change lives

Bringing the brightest and best students to Birmingham, and working to improve employment prospects after graduation, the University's outreach programme continues to grow.

New activity in 2012 included involvement in the DUX (Leadership) Awards to recognise the top Year 9 pupils around the country; and an event for deaf and hard of hearing students from local schools and colleges. Organised in partnership with the DEAF Fellowship, the event was supported by alumni Michael Chowen (Civil Engineering, 1959) and Elizabeth Treasure (BDS Dentistry, 1979).

A wide range of scholarships and bursaries are now available to students, to assist with living costs or tuition fees, and help fund activities that boost job prospects such as internships, work experience and summer schools overseas. This includes the flagship Access to Birmingham (A2B) programme, which welcomed 285 entrants in 2012. Over the past five years, 97.8% of students who passed the A2B entry module achieved a 2:2 or above, a slightly

higher proportion than for the University as a whole.

Learn more
www.birmingham.ac.uk/outreach

Turn to *the Difference* to find out how your gifts are changing lives through the outreach programme.



GREENER: The Rolls-Royce partnership will develop future generations of aero engines

© Rolls-Royce plc 2013

£60 million investment for world-leading research centre

Green air travel to take flight as Rolls-Royce partnership bolsters UK manufacturing.

Making greener and more efficient air travel possible, the University will work in partnership with global business leader Rolls-Royce for a new £60 million research centre.

Announced during last autumn's Conservative Party Conference by UK Chancellor George Osborne, the High Temperature Research Centre will develop future generations of aero engines, building on a longstanding collaboration between Rolls-Royce and the University's aviation engineering research group.

'This investment underscores the global influence of the University's metallurgical research and will build on our track-record of excellence in casting, materials, engineering

and manufacturing research to the benefit of the region and beyond,' explains Professor Paul Bowen, Head of the School of Metallurgy and Materials.

The new Centre will deliver world-class research programmes, training engineers from apprentice to postdoctoral fellow. The focus will include development of ICT systems to enhance product quality and production efficiency, improving manufacturing processes and delivering world-leading materials research.

The collaboration will be jointly funded by a £40 million investment by Rolls-Royce and a £20 million investment from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), through the UK Research Partnerships Investment Fund.

Scan me to find out how your business can collaborate with the University. For a specific enquiry, please contact the Business Engagement team at businessteam@bham.ac.uk



PARTNERSHIP: (l-r) Steve Taylor, University of Birmingham; Professor David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor University of Birmingham; George Osborne, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer; Hamid Mughal, Executive Vice President, Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology, Rolls-Royce



First Fellow studies thin air

While others spend their lives chasing away dust, Dr Zongbo Shi is certain that it holds the key to understanding our earth system and climate change.

This research made Chinese-born Dr Shi the first person accepted as a Birmingham Fellow when the programme launched in 2011, with the goal to bring the brightest and best academics from around the world to the University.

He says: 'The Fellowship is a great opportunity and I like Birmingham – both the University and the city. It's not easy starting a new academic career but I've had a lot of support from colleagues and the School and I'm very happy with how I've settled in.'

Dr Shi's research involves evaluating the impact that soluble nutrients in dust, such as iron and phosphorus, have on land and ocean ecosystems.

'Some chemicals in dust are a source of nutrition for ecosystems, and marine plankton and rainforests, which remove carbon dioxide in the air and produce more than half of the world's oxygen and can, therefore, have a significant bearing on climate change,' he adds.



Birmingham Fellowships at a glance

- Launched in 2011
- For outstanding, high-potential, early-career researchers of any age
- Appointed to a permanent academic post on a research and teaching contract
- Five years with protected research time
- Supported by alumni giving

Learn more

www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/excellence/fellows/about/index.aspx



VISION: Artist's impression of the new library

Library opens new chapter on campus

A new library for a new age is being planned at Birmingham to give students, staff and the local community a facility fit for the 21st century. Four people with close connections to the University and the library give their views on the change.



'With the closure of so many libraries around the country, it's exciting to hear about a new library in my home town. I saw the University as a "foreign fortress" when I was growing up in Birmingham and this project will break down some of those barriers. The library will be in the University but will connect with the wider world, reaching out to the community and helping to make universities seem less remote. Birmingham is my city, and the University is special to me, which is why I am supporting the University of Birmingham Library.'

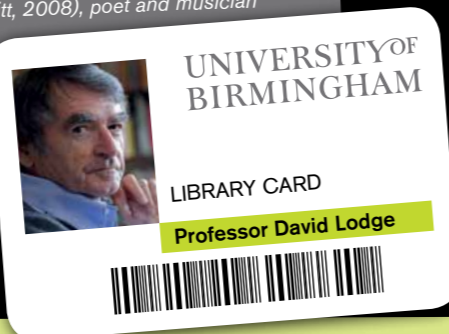
Dr Benjamin Zephaniah (Hon DLitt, 2008), poet and musician

'How can anyone measure the value of libraries? To question their existence is to question the necessity for learning. Knowledge penetrates deep within a person and works away invisibly, developing understanding, changing perceptions, chipping away at prejudices. Technology may have changed the face of learning in recent years, but books and computers can exist side by side in tomorrow's world and the fact that the University considers it worthwhile building a new library demonstrates its faith in the future of books and archives as well as the ever-changing face of progress.'

Clare Morrall (BMus Music, 1974), author

'Every great university has a great library. The new library and Cultural Gateway will make greater use of technology to meet the changing needs of students and staff, as well as being a vital resource for local schools and residents. Alongside this, a great deal of the existing physical material will be retained in the Research Annexe, to which we plan to offer managed access – something we are unable to do at present with our stores. This will allow us to have the best of both worlds – print and digital.'

Diane Job, Director of Library Services, University of Birmingham



'Most people who have studied or taught at the University at any time since the 1950s will probably react with mixed feelings to the news that its imposing redbrick main library is to be replaced by a gleaming new building of glass and steel designed for the digital age. I must admit to a spasm of regret myself. But one must face the fact that the Gutenberg Age is passing into the Google Age: scholars, scientists, and students these days do most of their work on computers, and obtain much of their information in digitalised form via that vast encyclopaedic virtual library known as the internet. The printed book has not outlived its usefulness, especially in the humanities, but it is no longer the dominant medium of information it has been for the last five centuries. A university library for the 21st century must take that into account, and the new one planned for Birmingham is a bold and imaginative response to the challenge.'

Professor David Lodge CBE (PhD English, 1967), author and Emeritus Professor of English Literature

Share your views about the library via our LinkedIn group. Join [LinkedIn.com](#) and search for 'University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends' or email alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Shifting safety up a gear

One of the automotive industry's most successful CEOs, John Plant (BCom Industrial Economics and Business Studies, 1974), runs a world-leading company in road safety technology and notes the ability to embrace change as the key to corporate survival.



No matter how careful you are, accidents happen. In fact, most drivers are likely to be involved in a car crash at least once in their lives. However, thanks to the innovative technologies being developed by one Birmingham graduate's company, fatal crashes are down to their lowest levels as cars are safer than ever before.

TRW Automotive is the only company of its kind to deal with all elements of car safety. Far from just seatbelts and airbags, the \$16 billion American company is currently developing a camera-based lane guidance system to help control steering and prevent accidents.

'The automotive industry is fascinating because it is in a constant state of change and the development of technology means we are always innovating,' explains Chairman of the Board and CEO, John Plant. 'The human dimension of saving lives is what gets me out of bed every morning.'

John's vision has ensured the company's continuous growth in spite of the tough

economy. They are currently launching 11 new manufacturing plants, nine of which are in China, and John notes the company's ability to react quickly to challenging conditions, offsetting market downturns in one country with growth in another, that is ensuring success.

'You have to embrace change to succeed in life. It is something that will occur whether you like it or not and therefore you will be better off, more satisfied and generally happier if you just accept it.'

John, who has been with the company for 35 years and its CEO for 11, wasn't always interested in the automotive industry. 'I really enjoyed my university course, although it certainly seemed difficult at the time. I wasn't sure what to do next, so I joined a professional accountancy firm as I didn't want to narrow my options.'

Although he was courting his wife when he was a student, an altogether different love affair forms John's favourite memory of

Birmingham. 'Muirhead's paternoster lift was fantastic. I remember riding it all the way round for the first time and feeling really brave, but in reality it was a disappointing experience as it took you from lovely city views to pure darkness in the basement.'

Learn more
www.trw.com



CRASH TESTS: An integral part of product development for TRW's occupant safety systems

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IS TOP BEAUTY SPOT



Birmingham was recently voted one of the most beautiful UK university campuses by the *Daily Telegraph* and we asked alumni on LinkedIn to explain why:

'The general area around the main campus is beautiful. Particularly impressive is the trompe l'oeil dome inside the Aston Webb,' says Jack Boteler (BA Theology, 2009)

'The campus is the reason I went to Birmingham. I visited other universities but nothing else compared,' explains Kat Crockford (BA Ancient History and Archaeology, 1999)

'As an engineer, I and others often made special trips to Muirhead Tower just to go on the paternoster – that was our favourite place,' says Greg Watts (BSc Minerals Engineering, 1983)

'I only graduated in July and miss it already. I fell in love with the beautiful green campus the minute I first visited,' adds Katie Hudghton (BA Media, Culture and Society, 2012)

Thank you to everyone who shared their favourite places with us. To add yours to the discussion, join the 'University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends' LinkedIn group on LinkedIn.com





GOLD: (l-r) Pamela Relph, Naomi Riches, cox Lily van den Broecke, David Smith and James Roe, winners of the rowing Legs, Trunk and Arms adaptive mixed coxed four

The greatest row on Earth

After being medically discharged from a military training scheme in 2010, Pamela Relph MBE (BSc Physics, 2011) took up rowing and is taking the sport by storm. A London 2012 Paralympic gold medallist as part of Team GB's LTA mixed coxed four, Pamela reflects on her unforgettable summer.

After winning the 2011 World Championships in Slovenia, did you think Paralympic gold was in reach?
Yes! I set my mind on the gold as soon as we started training after the World Championships. I trained with a mentality that every training session you do in the freezing cold when you would rather be in bed is where medals are won and lost.

What sort of memory do you have of the Paralympic final?
I remember thinking on the start line that the next three minutes and 20 seconds was going to hurt a lot. But also knowing our race plan and trusting in the training we had done and the race experience we had as a crew.

Can you describe your feelings after crossing the line?
I felt so emotional after racing but I don't think it was happiness about winning straight away. I

think it was more relief that the race was over because it hurt more than anything has hurt in my life, and relief that we had done what we and everyone else had wanted us to do.

What has life been like since becoming a Paralympic gold medallist?
I have had an awesome time since the Paralympics. I think a memory that will stay with me forever will be the medallists' reception at Buckingham Palace with the Queen which was such an honour.

What are your plans for the future?
I intend to stay on for Rio 2016 and hopefully I can defend my title there.

For more from Pamela, visit:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/pamelarelph

Future lawyers with increased appeal for employers

Supported by a national set of chambers, leading solicitors and judges are working together with academics to identify additional opportunities for students to gain firsthand experience of the legal profession. The new Centre for Professional Legal Education and Research (CEPLER) will build on the existing activities to provide further opportunities for students to be involved in mooting, debating, guest lectures, internships and pro bono work.

This year, alumni volunteers have been invited back to the Law School to judge moots. A moot is a mock trial of a legal issue which provides students with the opportunity to argue a fictional case and offers the closest experience students can have to appearing in court.

'Mooting experience is almost expected by employers in today's increasingly competitive job market,' explains Theresa Lynch, Director of Advocacy for CEPLER. 'The students have really appreciated the advocacy feedback and the chance to engage with legal practitioners and alumni.'

Ann Houghton (LLB Law, 2006) who volunteered to judge a moot competition, comments: 'Judging the moots has been fantastic and I have been very impressed with the quality of the students.' Fellow judge Mark Beesley (LLB Law, 1985) adds: 'The standard of the moot surpassed my expectations, as did the welcome from those involved.'

Learn more
www.birmingham.ac.uk/CEPLER

Could you help to judge mooting or otherwise support students' employment prospects? Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/getinvolved/volunteering.aspx

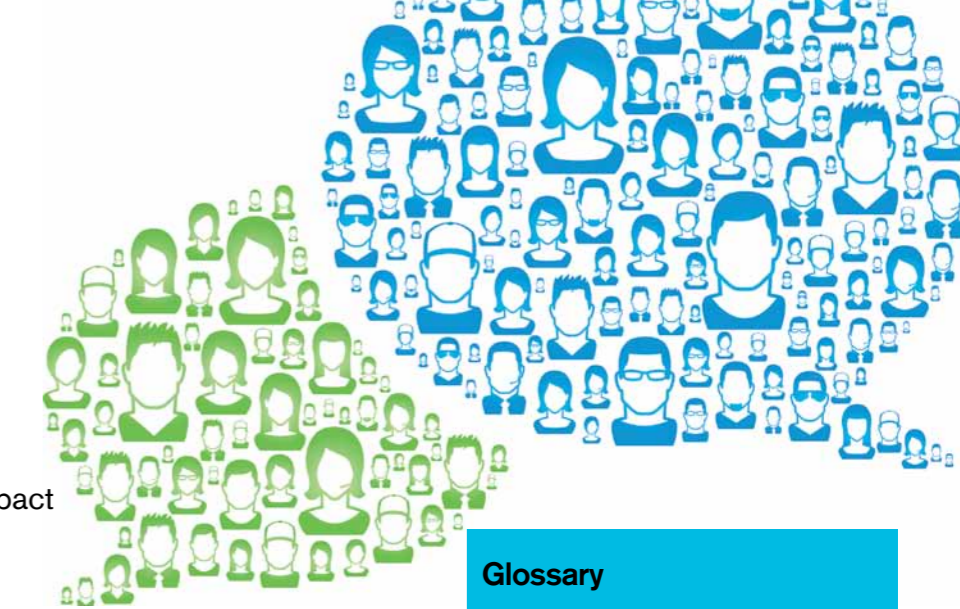
Web 2.0 is live and clicking

New research investigates the impact of the social media revolution and needs your help.

With the advent of Web 2.0 technologies such as tweets, blogs and other social media, we can now interact globally at any time of the day or night. A new research project at Birmingham is seeking to discover how this impacts our creativity and community involvement.

'Social media is revolutionising the media landscape,' explains Dr Caroline Chapain, lead researcher and lecturer from the Department of Management, Birmingham Business School. 'We're interested in the impact on three areas: hyperlocal publishing, community-led design and creative communities.'

Half of UK adults are regular users of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and



LinkedIn and this project, in collaboration with five other UK universities, will uncover how they use social media, why they use it and what value it brings.

'We are aiming to demystify social media, which many still view as a transient fashion,' says Dr Chapain. 'By understanding who is and isn't using it and how they are using it, we can evaluate its wider significance. Our findings will inform policy-makers and regulators of the technology.'

Get involved
Are you a social media user? The researchers leading this project would love to hear from you. Please visit <http://creativecitizens.co.uk>

Glossary

Web 2.0 – online platforms that allow users to interact directly with information and each other, such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs

Community-led design – design which brings together people working in the cultural and creative industry

Creative communities – individuals in the creative industry (such as designers, photographers, animators), often freelance, who share a physical workspace and/or social networks using social media

Hyperlocal publishing – discussion forums created to talk about what's going on in the local area

A lifetime of sporting memories

Plans for a new state-of-the-art Sports Centre on campus will help develop future sporting stars among students, staff and the community. We asked you to share your favourite sporting memories with us:

'I was in the table tennis team and after one away match, the coach left without us. We had to cram into the basketball players' minibus. It was very cosy as they weren't small!' Carol Austin (BCom Commerce, 1983; MA Cultural Studies, 2000)

'At a British Universities Championships cross country meet I finished 11th – quite a good effort for an old codger of 44. As my name was called out at the end, someone shouted: "This is Ron who's old enough to be the father of everyone in the race!" Another lad replied: "He probably was!"' Ron Macey (BPhil Education, 1980)

To send in your memories, email alumnicomunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk or tweet us @birminghamalum using the hash tag #UBSportmemories. For more sport news or alumni sporting opportunities including the 2013 Alumni Sports Day on Saturday 8 June, visit www.sport.bham.ac.uk



A lifelong relationship with UBSport

Keep in touch with former teammates and find out about opportunities to come back to campus by joining UBSport's alumni club. To find out more about this and our sporting successes, visit www.sport.bham.ac.uk

Attracting talented musicians

In recognition of the University's strong musical heritage, dating back to our first Professor of Music, Sir Edward Elgar, we will be offering 30 new Music Scholarships to talented musicians from September.

Our musical scholars will be encouraged to perform in at least one ensemble organised by the University Music Society and Department of Music during their studies, further enhancing our exceptional pool of musicians.

Applicants must have achieved grade 8 in instrumental or vocal studies and have an offer of a place on a non-musical programme at Birmingham. Successful candidates will be awarded £1,000 for up to three years, subject to academic progression at a 2:1 standard.

Learn more
www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/undergraduate/funding/music-scholarships.aspx



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LAW ALUMNI BURSARY

**A POSTGRADUATE BURSARY FOR ALL
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM GRADUATES**

For courses starting in September 2013, all University of Birmingham graduates are entitled to a £750 reduction on full-time postgraduate tuition fees for Masters-level taught courses in the College of Arts and Law. Find out more: www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumnibursary

Pharmacy investment prescribed for Birmingham

A brand-new Pharmacy programme, launching this autumn, is set to play a key part in the College of Medical and Dental Science's research and teaching agenda.



Gallery welcomes new Director

80th anniversary celebrations continue at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts with Nicola Kalinsky joining as their sixth director.

Research grants rise by 55%

The University's research awards have risen from £93 million in 2010/11 to £145 million this year, a jump of more than 55% while the rest of the sector remains stationary.

Weighty issue for dinner dates

New research from the School of Psychology has revealed your dinner date can make you put on weight.

Boosting the power of research

A new Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) opens its doors on 10 April to bring together expertise across the University, promoting collaboration between different disciplines and enhancing research power led by Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malcolm Press.

Soccer bookings show ethnic discrimination

The behaviour seen on Premier League football pitches is indicative of the attitudes of wider society with referees more likely to unwittingly discriminate against certain ethnic groups than others according to new research from the University's Department of Economics.

Future students head to campus

Thousands of prospective students will visit the University during the upcoming Applicant Visit Days, running until April, and Undergraduate Open Days on 21 and 22 June. All welcome.

To find out more and to keep up-to-date with the latest news, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/news



PROTECTIVE: Nurse fitting a thrombosis prevention electrode

LIFESAVING: VTE can be easily prevented with anti-clotting drugs and surgical stockings

Blood clots provide rich vein of research

New study seeks to raise awareness of effective prevention and management of thromboembolism.

Often thought of as a risk associated with air travel, the link between blood clots and hospitalisation is not so well known. In fact, Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) kills more people in the UK each year than breast cancer, MRSA, HIV/AIDS and road traffic accidents combined. Estimates range between 25–60,000 deaths per annum from VTE (as it is difficult to diagnose VTE prior to death, many deaths may be wrongly attributed to other causes).

New research by the School of Health and Population Sciences is seeking to raise patient awareness of VTE, which includes Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE).

VTE can be difficult to diagnose, yet easy to prevent with anti-clotting drugs and surgical stockings. Risk factors include obesity, increasing age, pregnancy, being immobile, having an operation, a previous blood clot, a diagnosis of cancer and taking certain contraceptives and hormone replacement.

'Under National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines, all patients admitted to UK hospitals should undergo a VTE risk assessment,' says lead researcher Dr Lorraine McFarland. 'It is vital that this takes place and patients understand why they are being assessed.'

'Our aim is to understand patient experiences and discover whether GPs have a role to play in educating patients about the risks of VTE.'

Dr McFarland and her team interviewed hospital patients and health professionals in five hospitals across the region. Around 1,400 GPs have also been surveyed.

'Once our analysis is completed this year, we'll have a clearer idea of the nature of our recommendation, but it is already evident that some form of national VTE awareness campaign is needed,' she concludes.

Learn more www.birmingham.ac.uk/haps

Everything changes as bestselling author shines

With a helping hand from singer Robbie Williams, Tasmina Perry (LLB Law, 1990) left a career in law behind her for a world of glamour, celebrity and imagination.

It is hard to imagine a gap-year job in a hot dog caravan igniting an award-winning writing career, but that's just how bestselling novelist and law graduate Tasmina Perry found her lucky break. Of course, the fact that some of her regular customers were a local boy band on the brink of stardom may have helped.

'There was a band who often came and danced in front of the hot dog van,' explains Tasmina. 'One day I spotted them in a local café, saw an opportunity and went for it. At the time I hadn't really given journalism much thought but had always enjoyed writing and had experience interviewing bands for Guild TV.'

Tasmina approached the friendliest-looking member of the band to ask them for an interview; he happily obliged and her life changed forever. 'I like to think Robbie Williams kick-started my career. It wasn't until two years later that I wrote up the interview and by that time Take That were huge. I had just qualified as a solicitor and saw a junior writer vacancy at a magazine. I applied with my exclusive interview and got the job.'

Taking a 60% pay cut, Tasmina's dream career began, becoming an editor after only two years and working on titles such as *InStyle* and *more!*

magazine. It wasn't until her honeymoon as she searched for a sunlounger read that Tasmina began writing novels to fill a gap in the market.

'I've always liked to challenge myself,' she explains. 'There are stories all around us so I started to write them and *Daddy's Girls* was born.'

Her first novel was such a success that she gave up her job to write full-time, alongside looking after her son Fin with husband and fellow author John Perry. Her latest novel and seventh *Sunday Times* bestseller, *Perfect Strangers*, was released last summer, and her experiences at Birmingham may soon grace the pages of a future novel.

'The thing I loved most about Birmingham was the campus culture,' she remembers. 'I would love to write a university-based novel, it is such an important time in your life. I met some great friends there and we are still great friends today.'

Learn more www.tasminaperry.com



Win Tasmina's latest best-seller

For your chance to win one of five copies of *Perfect Strangers*, answer the following question: **What was the name of Tasmina's first novel?**

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

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In the news

The University is constantly making headlines. Here is a snapshot of recent media highlights:

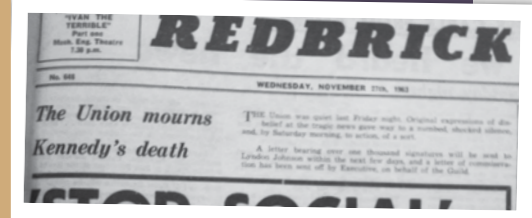
- **Professor Paul Aveyard's** study into the correlation between quitting smoking and weight gain featured on *BBC Radio 5Live*, in the *Guardian*, and internationally on *Bloomberg.com*, *ABC Radio Australia* and *Exame Brazil*.
- **The Barber Institute of Fine Arts** was featured as one of the best little known art collections by influential arts blog *CultureCritic*.
- *BBC Breakfast* filmed an outside broadcast at the University's **Shackleton Hall** for a feature on student finance.
- **Professor Scott Lucas** was interviewed widely nationally and internationally during the US presidential elections by a number of outlets including *BBC News*, *CNN* and political magazine *The Hill*.
- **Graham Martin and Jackie Chappell's** research into New Caledonian Crows and their wide field of vision was featured across international media including *National Geographic*, *China Post*, *Radio New Zealand*, *France 24* and *ABC Australia*.
- **Sir Hossein Yassaie** (BSc Electronic and Electrical Engineering, 1979) was interviewed by the *Independent* about his role in developing the new iPhone5 shortly before he received a knighthood in the Queen's New Year's Honours 2013.
- Access to Birmingham (A2B) student **Emma James** was interviewed on *Radio 4's Women's Hour* about her A2B scholarship for a wider feature on first generation women at university.

50 years on...

The American President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on 22nd November 1963.

This front cover from *Redbrick*, just days after, expresses the University's sadness at the tragedy and details a letter of commiseration sent to succeeding President Lyndon Johnson on behalf of the Guild of Students.

Do you remember where you were when you heard the news or do you have any other memories to share? Tweet us @birminghamalum using the hash tag #UoBmemories





GREY MATTER: Robotic research begins at neuroscientific centre of excellence

Robots revolutionise brain research

Demonstrating its place at the cutting edge of human brain function and robotics, the Centre for Computational Neuroscience and Cognitive Robotics' (CNCR) first research projects are now underway.

Two years have been spent recruiting staff in the Schools of Computer Sciences and Psychology, building up research momentum. CNCR staff are partners in more than £17 million of research funding, which combines brain imaging, cognitive neuroscience and psychology with robotics to develop a better understanding of brain function. Its findings will have a major impact on, among other things, treatments for people with brain injuries and neurological disorders.

Professor Chris Miall, Head of Psychology, offers two examples of the Centre's research. The first, 'CogLaboration', looks at the collaboration between humans and robots, and the intricacies involved in developing robots that can effectively assist humans.

Professor Miall explains: 'A mechanic might want a robot that can hand him tools, either by being told which tool is required or by pointing to it. The robot must be able to understand the command, identify the correct tool and be agile enough to pick it up and pass it to the mechanic safely.'

The second project, funded by the Medical Research Council, focuses on using robots to develop individual rehabilitation regimes for stroke patients.

The Centre is also developing a four-year doctoral training programme split between robotics and neuroscience.

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

My Guild, Your Guild



NOW AND THEN: David Franklin, studying Political Science and International Relations, is the current Guild President. Dr Andrew Vallance-Owen (MBCB Medicine, 1976; Hon DUUniv, 2012) is former Chief Medical Officer for Bupa and was Guild President in 1974/75

It may have been nearly 40 years since Dr Andrew Vallance-Owen was in David Franklin's shoes as President of the Guild of Students but not much has changed since his time in power. 'I campaigned for better facilities, services and entertainment, and of course the role turned into so much more than that,' he says.

Current President David also campaigned for diversified entertainment. 'I wanted the Guild to be more welcoming and cater to everyone's needs. I saw this as an opportunity to create a more unified student body – with the help of some better live bands.

'I quickly realised that entertainment was only a small part of my role. Representing 28,000 students is a daunting task but it has certainly improved my confidence; I was a shy and introverted student in my first year,' he says. 'I can't say I was ever that!' exclaims Andrew who was thrown into the mermaid fountain at his own wedding reception on campus. 'Things were much more raucous in my day.'

Both former and incumbent President list communication as their toughest challenge. Andrew maintained a visible profile in the bar,

gauging policy opinion over a pint, but things are very different for David. 'I have to be on form 24 hours a day – often I'll get a comment on my Facebook page at 3am asking what I'm doing about a specific issue,' he explains. 'I hope you say sleeping!' remarks Andrew.

The Sabbatical team was also much smaller in Andrew's day, with just a President and Vice-President, whereas David heads a team of seven full-time and 11 part-time officers. 'I spend a lot of time co-ordinating the passion and focus of my team,' he says.

Andrew's experiences took his career in a different direction, leaving clinical medicine behind. 'I came out a completely different person, much more interested in healthcare and politics and I thank the Guild for launching a varied career which I have hugely enjoyed.' He remains involved today as the current Chair of the Guild Trustee Board and an Alumni Leadership Mentor.

Were you involved with the Guild or do you have other memories to share? Email alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk or tweet us @birminghamalum using the hash tag #UoBmemories



World-class medical research will benefit patients

A new world-class translational medicine facility is being developed in Birmingham.

Providing a state-of-the-art life sciences resource for the city of Birmingham and the West Midlands region, the Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM) will ensure a greater number of clinical trials take place and put patients and industry within easy reach of researchers and clinicians.

Co-locating Birmingham's many world-class clinical specialities including the established trials units, a key feature will be a commercial hub designed to foster interactions between global pharmaceutical and biotech companies and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), maximising the benefits of the ITM to both patients and the UK's life sciences sector.

Dr Emma Robinson, Director of Operations for the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, says: 'The ITM will be an amazing facility that will enable the rapid translation of the latest research findings into clinical practice, meaning patients will benefit enormously – and quickly – from the collective expertise of the clinicians, researchers, trialists, healthcare professionals and commercial companies this will unite.'

The ITM is being developed in collaboration between the University and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, known as Birmingham Health Partners.

Learn more
www.birminghamhealthpartners.co.uk

DID YOU KNOW?



Artist's impression of new dental hospital

£31 million new home for dentists

Planning permission has been granted for a brand-new Dental Hospital and School of Dentistry in Birmingham. Subject to second stage approval from the Department of Health, it is hoped that the new hospital will open to patients and students in 2015. Housed on the former BBC Pebble Mill site in Edgbaston, the building will replace the current 50-year-old site in the city centre, bringing the school much closer to the rest of campus.

Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association

The University's involvement in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was explored at last year's Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association (GGAA) AGM. Talks on sporting connections and research into materials for sporting equipment were enjoyed by all.

The next forum will coincide with the University's autumn Open Day on Saturday 14 September. The programme will include talks on a theme to be decided, a campus visit, a short AGM and buffet lunch. All alumni are welcome to attend, regardless of graduating year.

For more information, please contact Norma Broadbridge, GGAA President via ggaapresident@bhamalumni.org. If you were a student in the 1950s or 1960s, your reminiscences of student life would be appreciated.

3D scan strengthens American partnership

A cutting-edge 3D scan has been presented to Birmingham's sister city, Chicago, USA, by the University's Dr Richard Clay and Dr Henry Chapman, co-directors of do. collaboration (formerly the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub).

Marking the University's first joint project with Chicago's National Public Housing Museum (NPHM), the 3D laser scan is of the Museum's future home in Chicago's west side and a historically accurate record of the existing building.



Honours apology

In the list of alumni awarded Queen's Honours published in the 2012 *Birmingham Magazine*, the following people were not included:

Dr Mike Jackson (MSc Plant Genetic Resources, 1971; PhD Botany, 1975) and Professor Julian Cooper (PhD Russian and East European Studies, 1975) both received an OBE, and Phillip Holmes (MEd Education, 1986) was awarded an MBE.

We would like to apologise for these omissions, and to anyone else not included in the list. Please contact us via alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk to update any of your personal details.

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 (find out how on page 2).

We will print as many updates as we can.

1940s

Betty Broad (née Hayes)
(BA French, 1945; Dip Ed, 1946)

Now 88 and widowed, I have wonderful carers in my own lovely home. Please contact me if you feel like it, you will remember my dear roommate Paddy (née Codd) whose daughter Christine Louise is my god-daughter, and is a constant help to me.

1950s

Peter Smith (BA English, 1954)

My 40-year career in university administration in Canada and the USA ended with an eight-year stint as Dean of the Graduate School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York City. Having spent ten retirement years puttering about somewhat aimlessly, I returned to the UK to begin a PhD in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television at the University of York.

Gillian Thomas (BA French and German, 1959)

After spending two years in the BBC's Paris News Office, I returned to Birmingham to get married, moving to London in 1967. I use both my French and German as a freelance journalist, specialising for the past 20 years in travel writing. You can see what I write on www.thetraveleditor.com

1960s

Neasen Eskin
(BSc Biochemistry, 1963; PhD, 1966)

I was delighted to be the 2012 winner of the Stephen S Chang Award by the Institute of Food Technologists for significant contributions to lipid or flavour science. My work has made significant contributions to the understanding of the quality and stability of edible oils which helped establish canola oil as an important oil in the world market.

Professor Serfontein Kritzinger

(MSc Physics of Solids, 1965; PhD Physical Metallurgy and Science of Materials, 1967)

My wife and I came to Birmingham from South Africa on a Union Castle boat – a voyage of 14

days during those times. After completing my PhD, I travelled to the US as a lecturer and was subsequently promoted to Professor of Solid State Physics in 1979. In 1984 I was appointed as the first Director of Research for about 130 university departments and I spent my last ten years before retirement as Registrar (Academic), still in the US. I look back on a very satisfying career to which Birmingham contributed a great deal. One of the highlights was when I, as Registrar, hung the hood over the shoulders of President Nelson Mandela when the US conferred an honorary doctorate on him at a graduation ceremony on 25 October 1996.



David Bender (BSc Biochemistry, 1968)

I retired from University College London in 2011 as Emeritus Professor of Nutritional Biochemistry, having been the Sub-Dean of Education, in charge of the first two years of the Medical course for the past ten years. I have many fond memories of Birmingham, which gave me a sound basis for my academic career.

John Westwood

(BSc Chemical Engineering, 1968)

At an early stage in my career I moved from engineering to sales and marketing, eventually becoming Vice President of Communications for a major multinational company. I have written seven books on marketing, marketing planning and exporting and my latest book, *How to Get Started in Export*, was published in June 2012.

To get in touch with any of the alumni listed, contact alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk

1970s

Govind Bindiganavale
(MSc Engineering Production, 1973)

Unfortunately I did not maintain contact with my classmates after returning to India. If you did Engineering Production and remember me, please get in touch.

Michael Cowlishaw (BSc Electronic and Electrical Engineering, 1974)

I spent 37 years with IBM, mostly very good, and was an IBM Fellow from 1990 until I retired in 2010. I am still doing electronics and have a microlight pilot's licence.

Professor Laxman Amaratunga
(PhD Minerals Engineering, 1978)

I received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Mineral Processors of the Canadian Institute of Mining (CIM) in January 2012 which was a great honour.

1980s

Stephen Wardle
(BSocSci International Studies, 1986)

After graduation I took a different vocational direction and trained as an Registered General Nurse at Selly Oak Hospital. I met my partner and we moved to London in 1990. I worked as a nurse for 18 months before joining the NHS General Management Training Scheme where I spent a fascinating 11 years. We left the UK in 2003 and have been moving around the world teaching English ever since, mainly in Ecuador.

Richard Whitehouse

(BEng Mechanical Engineering, 1988)

Since graduation I have continued to work in engineering. Having worked in aerospace, electric motor manufacture and automotive industries, I am Managing Director for the only factory in the UK manufacturing steam turbines and providing industrial support for power generation facilities in the UK and overseas.

1990s

Jonathan Dennis (BA Medieval and Modern History, 1996)

I have been writing short stories since an early age and have recently published my first novel, *The Good Die and the Bad Live On*. The book is set at the University and is a physiological thriller that explores themes of love, obsession and insecurity.

Tamsin Bailey (BA Ancient History and Archeology, 1996; MPhil (Art) History, 2000)

Following my degree, I completed my History MPhil at Birmingham in 2000. After this I worked a summer season at Buckingham Palace, then went on to work at Kensington Palace, where I stayed for seven years as Customer Service Manager. After a change of career, I am now six months into my History PhD at the University of Exeter.

Mohammed Akteruzzaman MBE
(MBA Public Service, 1996)

I was awarded a Channel S Television Award in 2012 for contribution to the Community in the United Kingdom. I have also set up my own charity in Bangladesh to help and support the poor in the place of my birth.

Andrew Craig
(BSocSci Economics and Politics, 1997)

I have spent the past two years working on the launch of a website www.plainenglishfinance.com and have just published a book entitled *Own The World* as part of my one-man crusade for financial literacy. The thrust of both is that people can derive enormous financial benefit from learning a bit more than average about investment and running their own money.

Hongming Cheng
(LLM Commercial Law, 1998)

I am currently the Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan.

2000s

Shonda Forde (MBA International Banking and Finance, 2000)

I have been able to grow professionally in the risk management field as a result of my Birmingham experience. I was recently promoted to head of compliance for an international private bank in Barbados.



Alistair Keen (BSc Biological Sciences, 2001)
I got married to Amy O'Dowd in April 2012 in front of our friends and family in Cheltenham. Best man was Graham Wright (BSc Biotechnology, 2001).

Graham Allcott

(BA Media, Culture and Society, 2001)

In 2009 I founded a training company specialising in boosting workplace productivity. This year I launched my book, *How to be a Productivity Ninja*, a practical guide to battling the key challenges faced by knowledge workers both inside and outside the nine to five.

Laura Fairbanks (née Clark) (BA Drama and English, 2008)

I married Simon Fairbanks (BA English 2007, MA English, 2010) on May 26 2012 in Nottingham on a beautiful summer's day. We are both enjoying married life together in Birmingham; I work at the University of Birmingham in the fundraising team and Simon works at Coventry University in Student Recruitment.



David White (PhD Computer Simulation and Artificial Life, 2009)

Since graduating I have set up a small company which specialises in application development for iPhone, iPad and Android. Many of our apps specialise in graphically rich interactive software including augmented reality. Find out more www.secretattic.co.uk




Be a good sport for charity

Find out how you can get fit, have fun and change lives through the University at www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/getinvolved/fundraisingforbirmingham.aspx

Events

Get together with friends and classmates, network with fellow professionals or simply come along for a 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, 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 at www.your.bham.ac.uk to ensure you don't miss out!

March

Distinguished Leaders Lecture Series, Tuesday 19 March

Tony Hayward, (Hon DSc, 2009) CEO of Genel Energy, will reflect on his personal journey and discuss the qualities of a great leader.

April

Fab 'n' Refresh, Saturday 20 April

Join fellow graduates from the past ten years for a special Guild night exclusively for alumni. Tickets are on sale now at www.guildtickets.co.uk

Leaders of Tomorrow Reception, Thursday 25 April

An opportunity for alumni and supporters to meet some of the students who have benefited from the University's Student Support Programmes. All welcome, please RSVP.

May

Birmingham Heroes Lecture, Thursday 16 May

Leading Professor of Astrophysics, Professor Bill Chaplin, will be delivering the second Birmingham Heroes lecture in London, exploring the latest groundbreaking research in astrophysics. A networking drinks reception will be held following the lecture. Further details to be confirmed but register your interest by email now.

Don't miss out

You can also find out about our events on social media.

Join us on:



Facebook – www.facebook.com/birminghamalumni



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



Twitter – follow @birminghamalum

Watch out for your new look Bite-size alumni e-newsletter, coming soon.

Update your details now at www.your.bham.ac.uk

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www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni

June

Anniversary Reunions for the Classes of 1988, 1978, 1973, 1968, 1963 and the pre-1963 Golden classes, Saturday 8 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 website for the full programme and to book your tickets. More than 400 people joined us last year – book early to avoid disappointment.

Alumni Sports Day, Saturday 8 June

Catch up on campus, play with your former 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.

Community Day, Sunday 9 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.

Happiness Lecture, Monday 17 June

The annual Baggs Memorial Lecture on the theme of 'Happiness' – what it is and how it may be achieved by individuals as well as nations will be delivered by broadcaster and former MP, Gyles Brandreth. A private reception will be held for those who have remembered the University in their Will.

July

'Welcome to London' Network, July

Are you new to London? Network with other recent graduates who have made the move to the capital, make new contacts and enjoy a free drink on us. Full details coming soon.

October

1983 Dentistry 30-Year Reunion, October

Join your fellow 1983 Dentistry classmates to celebrate your 30th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

1983 MBChB 30-Year Reunion, October

Join your fellow 1983 Medicine classmates to celebrate your 30th anniversary. Details to be confirmed.

November

House of Lords Reception, Friday 8 November

Tickets for the tenth annual reception at the House of Lords will be available to book online in August 2013. All alumni will receive an email notification – update your details at www.your.bham.ac.uk

September

CWAS (Centre for West African Studies) 50th Anniversary Conference, Wednesday 4–Friday 6 September

The conference will feature noted academics from the University of Birmingham and other institutions and will include the inaugural Fage Lecture, panel events and a celebratory drinks reception. More details will be announced soon.

MSc Geography 50th Anniversary Reunion, Friday 27–Saturday 28 September

Join fellow alumni for an academic conference on Friday, followed by a dinner and entertainment. Saturday will concentrate on Birmingham-related research and talks by alumni and retired staff. Full details will be available shortly.

December

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. See the 2013 *Birmingham Magazine* for details in the autumn.



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