



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

# The Birmingham Magazine

Issue 21 2009–10

# Autism: What's the difference?

A social disability or a variation in the human condition?  
How the University is researching everything from what  
causes autism to the benefits of its early identification

**Inside:** Circles of Influence campaign  
special. Learn how you can help the  
University transform lives.  
**See page 15**



Circles of influence

# From the Vice-Chancellor

Six months after I took over the Vice-Chancellor's role, I am, if anything, even more excited to be leading the University of Birmingham.

There has been much to celebrate in the short time I have been here; we have announced the construction of a new music building to complete the Aston Webb semi-circle, were chosen to host a national education programme supporting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, and have been named as Cancer Research UK's first national Cancer Centre.

A global force in research and teaching, Birmingham is fortunate to be in a position of financial stability but cannot be complacent in this period of economic downturn. We need to ensure that we take advantage of this hard-won financial stability in order to secure a sustainable future for the University. Work is continuing to address challenges including attracting outstanding students and increasing

our research income. We must also advance on our already impressive performance in the Research Assessment Exercise, an important national research survey.

Launched in this special edition of the Birmingham Magazine, our Circles of Influence campaign is a vital part of this future. Over the next two years we are aiming to raise the final £17 million towards our target of £60 million to help us transform both the University and lives beyond campus. Our chosen themes are health and lifestyle, society, heritage and culture, and creating the leaders of tomorrow – areas which affect us all. Our fundraising will focus on supporting research in which Birmingham excels. In the following pages, the University's wide-ranging impact is clear, from our groundbreaking work in autism research and investigating evolution



to the successes of alumni such as fashion figurehead Dr George Davies, film and theatre director Phyllida Lloyd and telecoms billionaire turned philanthropist Dr Mo Ibrahim.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank alumni and friends of the University for their support; whether you have volunteered your time or made a financial gift, we are deeply grateful. If this great institution is to continue to flourish as it moves into its second century we will continue to need your help and I hope you will join me in supporting our campaign. Your influence can help us to change the world for the better.

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

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### With your news, memories and feedback

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Or leave us your latest news at  
[www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

The views and opinions expressed in the University of Birmingham Magazine are not necessarily those of the Alumni Office or the University of Birmingham.

## Support the University

You can support the University in a range of ways:

- Direct Debit – making regular giving safe, easy and cost-efficient
- Online – visit our online giving site at [www.ecommercegateway.co.uk/bham/eDonate/](http://www.ecommercegateway.co.uk/bham/eDonate/)
- Via your tax return – you can give the University all or some of any tax refund through your tax return. Simply add the code FAH 59JG in section 19A.3 and call Fiona Newell on +44 (0)121 414 8136 for a Donation Form. You can also reclaim tax on the gift on next year's return
- Shares – most donors can claim tax relief on share gifts. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift/shares.shtml](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift/shares.shtml)
- Legacies – email Martha Cass on [m.cass@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.cass@bham.ac.uk) for more information
- Company matched giving – visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift/matching.shtml](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift/matching.shtml) for a list of participating companies
- Giving from overseas – you can make a gift to the University from anywhere in the world. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift/overseas.shtml](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift/overseas.shtml) to find out more

## In focus

Professor Graham Martin is pictured below having a morning chat with one of a colony of Great Cormorants raised from chicks at the University.

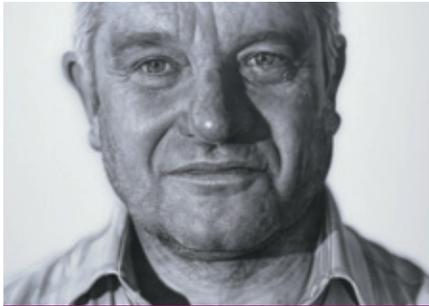
Graham, Professor of Avian Sensory Science and Chair of the Centre for Ornithology, is investigating how these majestic diving birds locate and catch their prey.

The cormorants are not the only unusual birds to have resided at Birmingham. In the 1980s a colony of Humboldt penguins lived on campus and peregrine falcons are believed to have nested in the clock tower this year.

Learn more about the Centre for Ornithology at [www.ornithology.bham.ac.uk](http://www.ornithology.bham.ac.uk)



# The year in pictures



## Alumnus celebrated at National Portrait Gallery

Jason Brooks' commissioned portrait of one of Birmingham's most celebrated alumni is shown at the National Portrait Gallery in London. Sir Paul Nurse (BSc Biology, 1970; Hon DSc, 1998) was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his work on the genes that regulate the cell division cycle.



## First super cancer centre launches

Birmingham becomes the first link in a unique chain of Cancer Research UK centres to be launched around the country. The University sets the pace for national and international progress for genetics, gene therapy and the link between viruses and some cancers, producing world-class research and moving it quickly from the lab to patients.



## Lights up on diabetes

The historic clock tower on Edgbaston campus lights up to mark World Diabetes Day. The tower was one of several iconic buildings across the world illuminated in blue as part of the day's events. The University was chosen as it is one of the UK's leading centres for diabetes research.



## Professor celebrates milestone

Professor of Business Finance John Samuels (BCom Industrial Economic and Business Studies, 1962) celebrates 50 years at Birmingham. He first arrived at Birmingham as a student in 1959 and has been involved with the University ever since. A past Dean, Head of School and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, he was recognised as a Foundation Fellow for his services to Birmingham and still teaches part-time as an Emeritus Professor. 'I have enjoyed being a part of a forward-thinking school with a reputation for producing high quality graduates,' he says. 'From the start the school had an international cohort of students, which proved our commitment to a global perspective.'

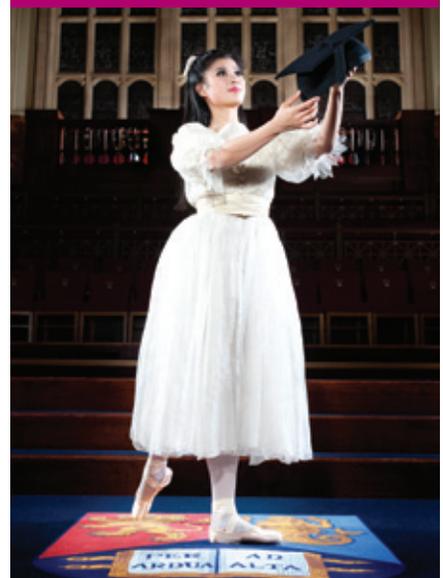
## Birmingham supports ballet

The University supports Birmingham Royal Ballet on its major tour of China. Birmingham has a long standing partnership with the ballet, which boasts several alumni among its dancers including Lei Zhao (MA Applied Studies in Dance, 2003, pictured). The tour visits Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai.



## Engineering a golden reunion

Fifty years after first meeting, a group of electrical engineering alumni return to Birmingham to discover how things have changed. Lynn Steer, Geoff Moore, Jim Laidler, Trevor Oliver, Ralph Richards and Ian Currier met in October 1958 and decided 50 years on to mark their golden anniversary with a campus reunion.



## BAFTA win definitely not embarrassing

A website focusing on embarrassing health problems sees a team at Maverick Television in Birmingham, including two alumni, pick up an award for interactivity. The site is linked to the Channel 4 television series *Embarassing Bodies* and allows people to get advice from doctors.



## Curtain goes up

Birmingham's George Cadbury Hall theatre home to the University's Drama and Theatre Arts Department, reopens. The £1 million refurbishment means the theatre is now excellently equipped to cater for undergraduate and postgraduate work. The opening is celebrated with a performance of *The Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht.

## New concert hall to open in 2012

Plans to build a 450-seat concert hall on the University's campus are given the go-ahead. The Chancellor's Court Auditorium, with its associated research, teaching and rehearsal facilities, will house Birmingham's internationally renowned Department of Music and complete the Aston Webb semi-circle, which has been the heart of the University since 1909. Alumni have the opportunity to name a seat in the auditorium to help raise funds for the project. For details, call Phil Addy on +44 (0)121 414 8641. For more on the project, see page 19.



## Change at the top

Professor Michael Sterling (left) retires as Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham after eight years and hands over the reins to Professor David Eastwood, previously Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Professor Sterling was instrumental in building Birmingham's academic reputation and bringing the University to a position of economic stability.



## Muirhead Tower reopens

One of the University's most iconic buildings, the 16-storey Muirhead Tower, officially reopens following a two-year transformation. The £40 million refurbishment was made possible through funding from alumni, foundations and trusts and has created a modern, attractive space for teaching and research for the University's Special Collections and the College of Social Sciences.



## UN Secretary General visits

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits the University to meet key figures including business leaders, leading academics and politicians from Birmingham and the West Midlands. Speaking at a specially organised reception at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Dr Ban stressed the need for global cooperation in tackling major issues.



# News

## Guild Build boosts student services

A major refurbishment of the student Guild is now under way, with completion due by April 2010. The Guild Build, in partnership with the University, directly addresses student feedback and aims to improve services to Guild members through better facilities and use of space.

Joe's Bar will be relocated, creating a new bar and restaurant offering high quality food and a comfortable place to relax and meet friends. The revamped retail area will include a lettings agency and Guild reception, and Mermaid Square will be given a fresh look with the Advice and Representation Centre, Job

Zone and Student Development all conveniently located off the square on the Guild's ground floor.

'We've been asking our members for feedback over the past two years and this programme will address some of the changes we've been asked for,' says Fabian Neuner, Guild President. 'Some comments were about wanting a place to eat, relax and have a cup of coffee. Some people said they would visit the Guild more regularly if it was a more attractive place. We think that once Guild Build is complete, it will offer all this and more.'



**A mermaid makeover:** The Square will be given a more modern, attractive look



## Will there ever be a better match?

Perhaps... Match funding means that for every £3 donated to the University before August 2011, the government will give us an extra £1.

**Learn more**  
[www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund)

## University opens first overseas office



Birmingham has marked a century of engagement with India by officially opening its first overseas office in New Delhi.

The office has been established to maintain partnerships with Indian institutions and businesses, support alumni in India, further consolidate research collaboration and provide local services to students who wish to study at the University.

It is 100 years since the first students from India studied at Birmingham and two new MA/MSc scholarships specifically for students from India have been announced to commemorate the centenary.

Vice-Chancellor Professor David Eastwood, who officially opened the office in August, says: 'We have come a long way in developing international relations and are proud that India

is the first country where we will have a permanent office presence. Birmingham is passionate about working with the Indian education sector and the opportunities the new office will present.'

During his visit to India, Professor Eastwood attended a reception celebrating the relaunch of the All India Alumni Group where he met alumni and spoke about his vision for the University. He also met with Kipil Sibal, the Indian Minister for Human Resource and Development.

Anyone interested in joining the group should email Aprajita Kalra at [a.kalra@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.kalra@bham.ac.uk)



## Fatherly pride from A2B

Widening participation schemes for students from families with little or no experience of higher education have helped 157 young people to study at Birmingham this year. Second year Maths student Jaydeep Mistry completed both a summer school, a week-long residential course designed to prepare pupils for university, and the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme, which offers an alternative entry route for targeted applicants, although he actually achieved the grades required for standard entry. His father Ratilal's pride in this achievement is testimony to the scheme's success.

### Ratilal's story

'I was over the moon when I found out Jaydeep had a place for summer school, especially at Birmingham. No one in our family has ever been to university and it allowed him to experience student life before he decided to go there.

'When he came back from summer school he looked more confident, he wasn't worried about it any more. He said 'I'll do it' and he didn't look back.

'The A2B programme helped build on this confidence and he got excellent A level grades. He called my wife and me to say he'd got into Birmingham while we were visiting family in India – the entire family was celebrating when we heard the news.'

### Jaydeep's story

'In my second year of A levels the summer school and A2B gave me a massive push, which I think I needed, and encouraged me to do more and more.

'I enjoy being at Birmingham because the campus is like a park and the University has a village atmosphere. Walking from the train station to the Guild I'll always meet five or six people I know.

'I now work as a student ambassador and I love it because I'm helping other people to grasp the same opportunity I had.'

For further information on supporting widening participation at Birmingham, call Phil Addy on +44 (0)121 424 8641.

## Professors leave lasting legacy

Two long-serving academics who carried out groundbreaking research at Birmingham have remembered the University in their wills. Professor of Experimental Pathology Kenneth Walton (6 September 1919–4 April 2008) joined the newly created department as a lecturer in 1948, becoming a reader in 1954 and a professor in 1960. A pioneer of rheumatology research, he helped establish and was director of the Rheumatism Research Wing.

Although he hit the headlines by feeding volunteers fry-ups to explore the causes of heart disease, his breadth of approach saw him research cardiology as well as rheumatism, and he also acted as a mentor for new lecturers. In the final years of his career he experienced an Indian summer of research, writing 35 peer-reviewed papers before retiring in 1987.

Professor Neville Brown (23 January 1923–6 November 2008), who arrived at Birmingham in 1955 and served as Professor of Comparative Law from 1966 until his retirement in 1990, played a crucial role in

the development of comparative law as an important scholarly subject. His work on French law and the differences between the common law and civilian legal systems brought him national and international recognition.

In 1970, he became Dean of the Law Faculty and during his four-year tenure laid the groundwork for Birmingham's pioneering Law with French degree, also persuading the faculty to introduce the study of European Community law into the undergraduate curriculum. He was appointed OBE for services to English law in 1988.

Professor Brown's legacy will fund an annual prize for comparative or European legal studies, while Professor Walton's gift will finance travel bursaries for Medical School staff aged under 40 to attend conferences or study abroad.

Our website [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk) now includes an obituaries section where full obituaries of Professor Walton and Professor Brown have been posted. For further details about leaving a legacy to Birmingham, call Martha Cass on +44 (0)121 424 6679.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### The Kenny Rogers effect

Stroke patients with a condition called visual neglect improve when they listen to their favourite music, University psychologists have discovered.

Dubbed the Kenny Rogers effect, the research appeared in the high-profile Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) journal and was picked up by the media worldwide.

Visual neglect is a cognitive problem patients experience in the right hemisphere of their brain, which causes weaknesses on their left-hand side. For example, patients asked to circle complete apples in a diagram simply did not see those on the left.

When patients listened to their favourite music while performing the tests, their results improved by about 60%. Functional brain imaging showed that this was linked to changes in connectivity in neural circuits.

Professor Glyn Humphreys, Head of Psychology, says: 'Patients with neglect often find everyday life difficult as they miss things, bump into furniture and have difficulty crossing the road.'

'Listening to their favourite music increases brain activity in the areas around the stroke and helps to improve their sight. Perhaps iPods should be prescribed for everyone who has had a stroke.'

The School of Psychology is now hoping to obtain funding to conduct the research on a wider scale.

### Learn more

[www.psychology.bham.ac.uk](http://www.psychology.bham.ac.uk)

### Social networking and more at your.bham

Joining our online alumni community is a great way to keep up with all the latest news and events from the University.

At your.bham you can post and find job vacancies, find out about benefits and discounts, share news about what you've done since graduating and update your contact details. You can also sign up for an alumni email forwarding address to ensure old friends can get in touch with you.

To register, visit [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

# News

## From Birmingham to Mars

A childhood dream has come true for Thomas Ormston (MSci Physics and Space Research, 2005) who works for VEGA Deutschland as a spacecraft operations engineer with the European Space Agency.

Based at ESA's European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany, his job involves monitoring and caring for the unmanned spacecraft Mars Express, which is on Europe's first mission to explore Mars. 'I still come into work with a huge grin on my face, working at the European Space Agency, flying spacecraft, sitting in a control room that looks like it's straight off a film set,' he says.

'It's all I hoped for while doing my degree at Birmingham and that degree has most certainly helped make my dreams come true!'

Thomas is responsible for the power and communications systems on Mars Express and it is his job to make sure the spacecraft generates enough electricity from its solar panels to run all its systems (about as much as you need for your washing machine).

He has to monitor the radio and other systems on the spacecraft that communicate with scientists on Earth and fix any problems they may have, all from more than 200 million kilometres away.

Involving students and amateurs in Mars exploration using a small webcam attached to the outside of the spacecraft is another part of Thomas' role, and he has also been involved in running projects to communicate with Mars spacecraft from other agencies, including NASA and the Russian Space Agency.



High flier: Thomas Ormston

Learn more

[www.esa.int/mars](http://www.esa.int/mars)

For further information about Physics and Space Research at the University, visit [www.ph.bham.ac.uk](http://www.ph.bham.ac.uk)

## Tackling graduate unemployment



Just the job: The Careers and Employability Centre is working to support graduates

With graduate unemployment rates at record levels during the recession, finding a job is a major concern for anyone leaving university. Birmingham was one of only 18 universities in the country to improve its graduate employment rate in 2008 and staff in the Careers and Employability Centre are doing all they can to help our Class of 2009 graduates find jobs.

Careers Consultant Sharon Winders says: 'We aim to inform people about how we can help them and what they can do for themselves. Being persistent, proactive and positive is very important when you're looking for a job or deciding on your future career direction.'

'All graduates should be aware that the Centre's full range of services is available for a year after they leave Birmingham and they can make use of our graduate website.'

Packs were handed out at graduation with details of services the careers centre can offer, including a graduate vacancy database, an RSS newsfeed with job market information and details of employer events, and an email enquiry system. Jobs are also advertised on our online alumni community [your.bham](http://your.bham).

The careers centre works with students throughout their time at Birmingham and alumni are always needed to get involved in careers events such as Media Day, Make a Difference Careers Day (environmental, not for profit and public sector) and many more subject specific events. Anyone able to help should email [alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

For further information on graduate careers, visit [www.as.bham.ac.uk/graduatecareers](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/graduatecareers)

The [your.bham](http://your.bham) jobs page is at [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

## Prestigious award for researcher

Katrien Pype, a postdoctoral researcher from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, has won a prestigious Newton International Fellowship to work with the Centre of West African Studies (CWAS) at Birmingham.

The scheme has been established to select the very best early stage postdoctoral researchers from all over the world and enable them to work at UK research institutions for a period of two years.

Katrien's research will focus on the significance and representation of the national past in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital city, particularly during public festivities in Congo's festive year 2010, when the nation celebrates 50 years of political independence.

During her two-year stay at CWAS, Dr Pype will contribute to a series of meetings and workshops on African media and popular culture, hosted by the department and planned in conjunction with the African Studies Association of the UK and the British Institute in Eastern Africa.



**Important:** The Lapworth Museum of Geology

## Conference celebrates an extraordinary life

# Culture on campus

From receiving national recognition to a major relocation, the University's museums and collections have had a busy year. Follow our culture trail for further details...

### The Lapworth Museum of Geology

Home to fossils, rocks, minerals and an array of other hidden treasures, the museum's collections were formally designated as being 'of outstanding National and International Importance' by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council during late summer 2008.

The Lapworth is one of only 130 museums, libraries and archives in the country to have been awarded the status, which puts it on a similar footing to the Barber Institute and other major university museums and also opens up opportunities for funding. The world-famous 'Dudley bug', stunning minerals and beautifully preserved fossil fish are just a few highlights of the museum's 250,000 specimens.

Following designation and the recent transfer on long-term loan of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery's geological collections to the Lapworth, plans are under way for a major project to include restoration and refurbishment of the original Edwardian gallery, creation of new display space and development of the museum's education and outreach work.

#### Learn more

[www.lapworth.bham.ac.uk](http://www.lapworth.bham.ac.uk)

### Special Collections

The Cadbury Research Library, the new home for the University's Special Collections, is awaiting the go ahead to open.

Based in the newly refurbished Muirhead Tower, the facility includes a 30-seat seminar room, state-of-the-art Conservation Studio and research space for up to 45 people, plus a new exhibition space on the mezzanine floor.

Susan Worrall, Director of Special Collections, says: 'The library will provide a first-class setting for researchers to engage with our unique and precious rare book, archive and manuscript

collections including the Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern manuscripts, which has recently received Designated Status as a collection of National and International Importance.'

A key feature of the new facility is state-of-the-art storage for collections with significantly increased expansion space. The storage areas are currently undergoing a test and commissioning regime to ensure that they obtain the highest quality level of environmental controls required to meet the British Standard, which will make the facility among the best in the country. This process is complex and detailed and work will continue until the quality level is achieved. In order to maintain the service to researchers, Special Collections has reopened in the Main Library for a temporary period until the testing and commissioning is complete.

#### Learn more

[www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk](http://www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk)

### The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

The refurbished Barber Concert Hall is getting plenty of use, hosting a full programme of concerts, festivals and recitals this year. Transformed back to its art deco splendour following several decades of neglect, the hall reopened in October 2008. The Institute's art collection includes paintings, drawings and sculpture by most of the major names in western art including Monet, Renoir and Picasso.

Exhibitions currently running at the Barber Institute include:

- Inspired Stitches: Textile Responses to the Barber Collection – until 10 January 2010
- Going Dutch: Golden Age Treasures from the Holburne and Barber Collections – 13 November 2009 – 28 February 2010
- Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money – until 16 May 2010

#### Learn more

[www.barber.org.uk](http://www.barber.org.uk)



The extraordinary life of Birmingham entrepreneur Matthew Boulton was explored at a major conference organised to celebrate his bicentenary in July.

More than 100 academics attended the event to discuss the man who was referred to as 'the father of Birmingham'.

Professor Peter Jones of the School of History, who gave a keynote lecture entitled 'Matthew Boulton: Enlightenment Man', says: 'It was a conference about innovation, emulation and knowledge transfer.'

Boulton is famous for building the Soho Manufactory at Handsworth, a factory building with a country house façade where jewellery, coins, medals and 'toys' such as snuff boxes and watch chains were made and exported all over Europe.

He pioneered the steam engine invented by his business partner James Watt, and campaigned for the Birmingham Assay office to be established to monitor the quality of jewellery.

The conference was organised by the University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University and the Assay Office Birmingham. While Professor Jones' lecture explored Boulton's attempts to inspire polite recreation in the city and the backlash against this in the 1790s, the other keynote speakers debated Boulton's role as a scientist and a creative pragmatist.

The Barber Institute is hosting an exhibition about the Soho Mint until May 2010. For further information, visit [www.barber.org.uk/coins/matthew.html](http://www.barber.org.uk/coins/matthew.html)

# University events

From a quiet after-work drink to networking opportunities, there are a variety of events on offer to help you keep in touch with friends and connect with one another. Details of forthcoming events are below and available on the website [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk). To find out more or for help getting in touch with classmates, contact Clare Gordon on +44 (0)121 414 8904 or email [alumnierevents@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnierevents@contacts.bham.ac.uk). 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!

## 26 November 2009 – Huxley Lecture

All are welcome to hear evolutionary biologist Professor Stuart West, from the University of Oxford, speak at this annual event. 5.00pm start in Haworth 101.

## 3 December 2009 – London Christmas Party

Join 70 of your fellow alumni to celebrate the festive season. This year's party will be held at a new venue – Firefly City on Old Bailey. Your first drink is on us, please RSVP in advance. All alumni welcome.

## 7 December 2009 – University Carol Service

This annual event, organised by the University Chaplains and the Department of Music, is a joyful Christmas celebration for staff, students and families. All are welcome, 6.15pm start in the Great Hall.

## 11 December 2009 – Festive drinks at the German Market, Birmingham city centre

We have hired a private area at the German market for alumni to pop along after work for a glass of Glühwein and a mince pie. Your first drink is on us, please RSVP in advance. All alumni welcome.

## January 2010 – Brussels reception

Alumni living, working or just visiting the area are invited to an alumni reception at the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels. After the reception, there will be an opportunity to network with alumni from other universities in the West Midlands. Further details on the website, all alumni welcome.

## February 2010 – Access to Birmingham supporters reception

An opportunity for alumni who have supported the Access to Birmingham scheme to meet their scholarship recipients. Event by invitation only.

## March 2010 – London Professional Network

Network with fellow alumni from the worlds of finance, insurance, property and legal related professions over wine and canapés. Visit the website for details.

## 18 March 2010 – Athens reception

Meet and network with alumni living and working in Greece. All alumni are welcome to attend. An invitation will be sent to alumni by email, register your details at [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk) to make sure you receive the invite.

## 24 April 2010 – Fab 'n' Refresh

Get your friends together and head back to the newly refurbished Guild for an evening of student club night Fab 'n' Refresh especially for alumni! Tickets now on sale.

## 24 April 2010 – Class of 2000 Reunion

Celebrate the 10th anniversary of your graduation with an afternoon back on campus and a night at the Guild. Campus tours and visits to academic departments will be on offer before an informal reunion dinner in Selly Oak, followed by Fab 'n' Refresh in the new Joe's Bar.

## May 2010 – Media and the Arts Network

Network with alumni working in the media, culture, arts, drama and related creative industries over wine and canapés. Further details will be confirmed shortly. Register your interest by email.

## 5 June 2010 – Alumni Sports Day

Alumni go head-to-head with current students in a variety of sports at the ninth annual sports day. Visit the website or email Laura Bainbridge via [l.bainbridge@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.bainbridge@bham.ac.uk) for details.

## June 2010 – London Summer Party

Enjoy a summer evening with a cocktail and fellow recent graduates at the popular summer party. Please RSVP in advance.

## September 2010 – Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association AGM

Further details to follow.

## 5 November 2010 – Seventh Annual House of Lords Reception

Enjoy views of London's premier landmarks with wine, canapés and great conversation. Tickets on sale from August.



*George Davies shares business advice with current students*



*Wine and canapés overlooking the River Thames*



*Reunion day in the Great Hall*



Join us at the next London Christmas Party on 3 December



Alumni at the Birmingham Professional Network, March 2009

## Save the date

**Saturday 12 June 2010**  
**Anniversary Reunions for classes of 1985, 1975, 1970, 1960 and earlier**

Celebrate the anniversary of your graduation with friends and classmates on campus. During your reunion day meet current staff and students, visit your academic department, take a tour of the campus in addition to having plenty of time to catch up with friends over your reunion lunch. The day will culminate in a reunion dinner with all anniversary classes.

To book your place at the reunion, please complete the form included with the Magazine or get in touch with Clare Gordon.

Forthcoming reunion dates are Saturday 18 June 2011 and Saturday 16 June 2012, why not save the date now? Contact the Alumni Office for help tracing friends and classmates.

## Cut out and keep Calendar

### November 2009

- 26 November 2009 – Huxley Lecture

### December 2009

- 3 December 2009 – London Christmas Party
- 7 December 2009 – University Carol Service
- 11 December 2009 – Festive drinks at the German Market, Birmingham city centre

### January 2010

- January 2010 – Brussels Reception

### February 2010

- February 2010 – Access to Birmingham supporters reception

### March 2010

- March 2010 – London Professional Network
- 18 March 2010 – Athens reception

### April 2010

- 24 April 2010 – Fab 'n' Refresh
- 24 April 2010 – Class of 2000 Reunion

### May 2010

- May 2010 – Media and the Arts Network

### June 2010

- 5 June 2010 – Alumni Sports Day
- June 2010 – London Summer Party
- 12 June 2010 – Anniversary Reunions. Classes of 1960 and earlier, 1970, 1975 and 1985

### September 2010

- September 2010 – Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association AGM

### November 2010

- 5 November 2010 – House of Lords Reception

[www.alumni.bham.ac.uk](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk)



# Groups and societies

For full reports from many alumni groups and societies, information about groups around the UK and the world, including how to join and details of upcoming events, log on to [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

## UK groups

### University Scout and Guide Club 60

BUS&GC60 is holding its next reunion in Leominster from Friday 26 to Monday 29 March 2010. Accommodation is booked at the Leominster Youth Hostel and more details may be obtained from Rog and Jen McNae on 01531 637312. Accommodation is very limited, so please contact them as soon as possible, otherwise local B&Bs will have to be used.

### Birmingham University Bristol Association (BUBA)

BUBA marches on and recent events have included our Annual Dinner at which Pro-Chancellor, Dr Jim Glover spoke, a canal boat trip, a Members' Evening and talks on the police, the Samaritans and the Galapagos. Future events are a trip to Frome, AGM and American Supper, a Christmas event and a talk on Australia. Most meetings are held at members' houses in the Bristol Area. New members will be made very welcome. Contact Rene Thomas on 0117 973 6166 or John Smith at [johningsmith@chyanmor.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:johningsmith@chyanmor.wanadoo.co.uk)

### BUGS (Birmingham University Graduates in Scotland)

BUGS members have enjoyed quite a number of events during 2009. These have included a 'Spring Sensation' (Saturday 14 March) at the Hunterian Museum, Art Gallery and Mackintosh House, University of Glasgow, and a Summer Awayday and Walk (Saturday 13 June) in the beautiful countryside around Crieff. Events concluded this year with the very popular AGM and Annual Dinner, held on Saturday 10 October in the Royal Over-Seas League, Edinburgh. For further details see the BUGS website [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

### Midlands Branch

We have a varied programme with interesting monthly meetings providing a link to the University and the local area. We usually include a lunchtime visit to University College Birmingham (or as we old-timers call it, the College of Food), and in the summer we go on a day's outing. Recently we have been to look around Madresfield Court (*Brideshead Revisited*). We also have evening meetings on the University campus, covering a wide range of subjects. For details of future and past events, see our website [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

## International groups

### Canadian Alumni Chapter

In celebration of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Canadian Alumni Chapter, a garden party was held at the elegant residence of the British Consul General in Toronto, Jonathan Dart, on 30 August. More than 70 alumni and guests were in attendance and a very pleasant afternoon indeed was held, meeting old friends and greeting new ones.

Our grateful thanks are due to Mrs Claire Dart and Mr Dart and to their staff for allowing us to use their home and for being such gracious and helpful hosts. Many thanks are also due to those of our committee members whose hard work made the event possible, in particular Danny Linehan, without whom the event would surely never even have happened. We began the Birmingham adventure more than ten years ago and while the very nature of the country means what we can achieve is not much, we have hung together, enjoyed each other's company and once a year flown the Birmingham flag.



Beautiful Crieff countryside: BUGS enjoy a scenic walk



Canadian garden party: Jonathan Dart with the oldest alumnus in attendance Dr Nosrat Ameli (MBChB Medicine, 1937) and the youngest alumna present Odelia Culley (MBA International Business, 2007). Picture: Hal Potts (BSc Mechanical Engineering, 1957)



**Celebration:** The Canadian Alumni Chapter marks its tenth anniversary

Picture: Hal Potts



**Mauritius alumni:** The group do lunch at Bel-Ombre

### Mauritius Alumni Group

Mauritius alumni met on 26 July at the golf resort Golf du Chateau at the extreme south of the island. The event started off with a session of golf initiation, followed by a visit to the historic building of Le Chateau and then lunch. The group discussed the need to meet regularly and the benefits this can achieve such as knowledge sharing and active contribution to the society. For more information, contact [birendra.purmanan@gmail.com](mailto:birendra.purmanan@gmail.com)

### Societies

#### Chancellor's Hall Association

Chancellor's Hall Association held its biannual general meeting and reunion on Saturday 25 July at the Lucas Conference Centre followed by a friendly and relaxed dinner. The next reunion is planned for 2011.

#### University House Association

UHA held a Special General Meeting on 26 September and agreed to convert to a web-based organisation hosted by the Alumni Office. There are web pages with information about our history, photographs, the newsletter and members' memories of House. All alumni who lived in House can participate.

To access our site you need to join your.bham.

Just go to [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

To contact us or contribute items for the site, please e-mail [uha@bhamalumni.org](mailto:uha@bhamalumni.org)



**Lasting tribute:** University House Association president Isobel Jackson with a bench donated to Winterbourne Botanic Gardens in memory of Peggy Beale

## Guild of Graduates AGM

Once again, warm sunshine greeted alumni attending the Annual General Meeting of the Guild on Saturday 12 September 2009 in the Chemical Engineering building. Holding the meeting on the same day as the University Open Day ensured that all the buildings were open for us to visit and the whole campus looked active and attractive. President, Professor Joe Biddlestone (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1958; PhD Chemical Engineering, 1961) welcomed those attending, including familiar faces from the regions and other groups, and then chaired the AGM. The following were elected Guild Representatives on Court (from January 2010 for five years): Norma Broadbridge, Heather Cannon, David Clegg, Janet Emery, Peter Kendrick, Arthur Lee, Lesley Parsons, and Gary Weaving.

Guild officers and committee for 2009–10:

President: Joe Biddlestone  
 Vice-President: Nick Emery  
 Secretary/Treasurer: Stephen Parsons  
 Alumni Awards Officer: Mary Hill  
 Committee members: Lesley Payne, Arthur Lee, Norma Broadbridge, Calliope Harrison.

After an excellent lunch there followed a fascinating illustrated talk from recently retired Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Les Clark on the development of the University Estate (Les had been the first PVC appointed with a specific responsibility for estate development). After reviewing how the campus had reached its present form over the years, he then concentrated on the more recent buildings and set out some of the future plans. Pride of place went to the recently completed refurbishment of the Muirhead Tower, but just as important, if less glamorous, was the current work on the miles of service tunnels beneath the University.

For the future, the completion of the Aston Webb semi-circle with a splendid new Department of Music building and concert hall was a most inviting prospect. Les was then kind enough to take an interested party on a tour of some of the subjects of his talk.

# Sports news

## The ironman nutritionist

Ironman champion, academic and nutritionist to elite athletes including Ethiopian marathon runner Haile Gebrselassie, Professor Asker Jeukendrup is far removed from the image of a sports scientist in a lab coat.



**In training:** Asker prepares for a triathlon with alumna and Ironman World Champion Chrissie Wellington

Director of the Human Performance Lab in the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Professor Jeukendrup's research is focused on what athletes should eat and drink to achieve optimum performance. He often uses his own experiences to raise key questions, competing in Ironman triathlons, comprising a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run, to test his body to its limits.

'I've made it my mission not just to research but to translate science into something more practical. A lot of people do research and a lot of people work with athletes but there's a big gap between the two and a huge need to bridge that gap,' he says.

This unique approach to research was recognised in 2005 when he became the University's youngest professor at the age of 35. His previous projects include studying the amount of carbohydrate an athlete needs to take on board during an endurance race such as the Tour de France or London Marathon. Around 90g of carbohydrate per hour is required during these events but an athlete would need to drink about a litre-and-a-half

of sports drink hourly to achieve this. The research found that carrying and consuming sports gels alongside sports drinks was an effective way of improving performance.

Chelsea Football Club, cyclist Lance Armstrong, Ironman champion Chrissie Wellington (BSc Geography, 1998) and more regular clients have all received nutritional advice from Asker and he enjoys meeting the

different challenges that each presents.

'If you compare the nutritional needs of someone competing in an Ironman race to someone who may be a bit overweight and goes to the gym a couple of times a week there's a totally different focus,' he says. 'In one case it's about how to get enough energy in, in the other it's about encouraging someone to manage what they eat and drink.'

On visits to Ethiopia to advise Haile Gebrselassie, Gete Wami and other marathon runners on nutrition, he has been amazed with their level of training. 'They train so hard that when it comes to doing a race they find it easy,' he says. 'Working with elite athletes is like working with Formula 1 cars, it's about fine tuning to find out how you can make the engine perform better. They're also a really good model for understanding how the human body works and the influences of exercise and training, meaning my research can often be applied to treating obesity and diabetes.'

- In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, a UK-wide quality survey, Sport and Exercise Sciences research at Birmingham was rated as world-leading and ranked equal first in the country.

**Learn more**

[www.liveweb137.bham.ac.uk](http://www.liveweb137.bham.ac.uk)



**Elite athletes:** Ethiopian marathon runners in training



## Circles of influence campaign

Circles of Influence is the University's £60 million campaign to help make a real and lasting impact on global health and lifestyle, society, heritage and culture, and to provide opportunity to the most talented students and staff.

The campaign has been conceived to enhance all of our lives by tackling a range of practical challenges that will have impact not just in the University but also across our unique multi-cultural city, and further afield in the UK and internationally.

This special edition of your magazine explains why the campaign is so important and what our goal of £60 million will achieve. It also explains the four campaign themes and the projects within them. If you wish to play a part and make a gift, please return the donation form on page 39.

By the campaign's end in 2011, we hope that Birmingham's many circles of influence will stretch even further than they currently do – raising our profile and further advancing our existing strengths in research and teaching.

## Transforming the world

From establishing the UK's first university medical school to improving breast cancer survival rates and synthesising vitamin C, your university has been transforming lives for more than a century. This drive to make a real impact on the world around us, while still advancing our research and teaching in areas in which we excel, is the reason we are launching our £60 million Circles of Influence campaign.

We are constantly seeking new ways to tackle the major challenges facing society and this is reflected in our four campaign themes – health and lifestyle, society, heritage and culture, and creating the leaders of tomorrow.

Alongside vital research into global health and wellbeing, we are championing practical clean energy and promoting cultural and personal enrichment. We will continue to recruit, educate and support today's best students – regardless of their background – to become the leaders of tomorrow. To attract outstanding students and world-class staff, we'll maintain our focus on ensuring we have an outstanding

campus and facilities. The campaign will not only help transform the wider world, but it will also directly benefit the University by investing in areas of real strength to help us become an institution with which you can continue to be proud to be associated.

The Circles of Influence campaign has an ambitious, but achievable, target of raising £60 million by 2011. Thanks to the deep generosity of our friends and supporters, we've raised almost £43 million already, leaving £17 million outstanding. To demonstrate my commitment to the campaign, I am personally donating £40,000.

Circles of Influence is an exciting opportunity for everyone connected with the University to play a part in helping us to change the world and the way we lead our daily lives for the better.

**Professor David Eastwood**  
Vice-Chancellor



### Message from the Chancellor Sir Dominic Cadbury

Through the Circles of Influence campaign, the University is facing some of the major challenges of the next century head on – from health and the environment, to industry and developing the leaders of tomorrow. At the same time, we are raising the University's reputation for research and teaching quality.

All this is only possible thanks to a culture built on philanthropy, original thinking and the pursuit of excellence, allied to a long-held understanding that the University should contribute to society and not simply exist parallel to it.

My family and I have long enjoyed a valuable relationship with the University, during which time we and associated trusts have been major donors. It is a highly privileged position to be able to change the world and, as our alumni, I very much hope that you too will choose to play a part in the campaign as it helps us achieve our goals.

Thank you.

**Sir Dominic Cadbury**  
Chancellor of the University and President of the Circles of Influence campaign

## Quick Q&A

### Q. What is a campaign?

A. Often referred to as a capital campaign, it is a programme running over a fixed period of time that mainly aims to raise money for specific projects or initiatives within a charitable organisation. Campaigns also help to advance other aims such as raising the organisation's profile and boosting excellence in teaching and research.

### Q. What is Circles of Influence?

A. Circles of Influence is the University's current campaign – its biggest ever fundraising effort. Running until 2011, the name highlights Birmingham's goal to have an impact way beyond campus, through world-leading, socially important research and producing the leaders of tomorrow. It also emphasises the idea that everyone connected with the University can influence its future.

### Q. What's the campaign fundraising total?

A. The total target is £60 million, however support from alumni and friends to date means £43 million has already been raised, leaving £17 million outstanding. The campaign funding will be used for a whole range of projects within the four main themes of global health and lifestyle, society, heritage and culture, and creating the leaders of tomorrow. Find out more about the campaign projects on pages 16–19.

### Q. Why should I get involved?

A. All your support really will make a huge difference towards our target, ensuring you play your part in helping us change the world.

### Q. How do I support the campaign?

A. You can support the Circles of Influence campaign in a whole range of ways, from making a gift to a project that matters to you, to spreading the word about the importance of the University's research. You can find out more information or make a gift via the campaign website: [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence) or by completing and returning the donation form on page 39.



Circles of influence

# Health and lifestyle

From reducing breast cancer deaths to pioneering new treatments for obesity and its life-threatening effects, Birmingham excels in critical health and lifestyle research, addressing issues that affect millions of people every day.

‘We are at the forefront of a cancer revolution – translating our research into new treatments. We have created a unique blend of doctors, scientists and nurses all working together to ensure that laboratory discoveries are rapidly developed into treatments.’

Professor Lawrence Young  
Head of the College of Medical  
and Dental Sciences

Our global reputation for excellence means we can recruit international research leaders, develop innovative research partnerships and foster interdisciplinary research. Circles of Influence will help us further develop areas of existing research strength, often focused on areas that are urgent. Campaign projects within the health and lifestyle theme include:

#### Cancer

Worldwide, ten million people each year are diagnosed with cancer. In the UK, one in three will develop the disease, of which one in four will die. The University is the first Cancer Research UK Centre and more funding will enable our researchers to make lifesaving breakthroughs more quickly thanks to more equipment, better laboratory space and more world-class researchers.

‘I owe my life to cancer research at Birmingham.’

Dr Doug Ellis OBE  
(DUniv Honorary Degree, 2008),  
donor and former Chairman of  
Aston Villa FC

#### Obesity

More than 20% of the UK population is now obese, costing the economy more than £3 billion per year and increasing the incidence of diseases including cancer and type 2 diabetes. Obesity is increasingly a problem in children, meaning this could be the first generation to die before their parents. Establishing the Centre for Obesity Research will fully exploit existing multidisciplinary research expertise and facilities, uniquely placing the University to quickly have an impact in terms of treatment and prevention.

#### Healthy ageing

By the year 2020, one in five of the population will be aged over 65 years thanks to improvements in public health and medicine. Unfortunately, there has been no mirroring increase in the length of time spent in good health and, on average, men suffer poor health for the last six years of life, increasing to 11 years for women. To combat this, Birmingham is creating AgeLess – The Birmingham Centre for Healthy Ageing Research – aimed at developing interventions to ensure old age can be enjoyed rather than endured.

#### Brain injury

There are around 250,000 cases of brain injury (such as stroke or head trauma) in the UK each year, and similar numbers are diagnosed with degenerative change due to disorders such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Disease, causing pain, distress and a dramatically reduced quality of life. The University is seeking to develop innovative, new treatments by establishing the globally unique Centre for Computational Neuroscience and Cognitive Robotics (CN-CR).

#### Learn more

[www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence)

**Lifesaving research:** Elisabeth Shawcross, 3rd Year PhD Cancer Studies student





## Society

A university driving social and economic change, Birmingham continues to work with its many partners to support a stable and productive society. Since its foundation, the University has contributed significantly to the public and private sectors via research, input into local governmental policy and the training of highly qualified graduates.

Looking at critical issues of broad importance including practical clean energy, personal financial management and excellence in subjects vital to a globally competitive and productive economy, the University is striving to make a dramatic impact in carefully selected areas within the society theme including:

### Hydrogen

The world's scientists have confirmed climate change is 'unequivocal, quite definitely caused by humankind and already happening', meaning a coordinated global solution to reduce carbon emissions has become an urgent economic and social necessity. Hydrogen, with water as its sole emission when used as fuel, could potentially offer a realistic alternative to fossil fuels but presents difficulties including its safe production, storage and application. Birmingham is the only UK research institution working on all aspects of hydrogen energy research.

### Centre for Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM)

At a time of growing economic uncertainty, responsibility for financial assets such as pensions, property and savings is shifting from the state to the individual. In addition, important factors affecting us all, such as how the financial services industry is regulated and governed, need urgent independent analysis. The proposed new Centre for Household Assets and Savings Management will provide a focus for world-class research, developing an international, interdisciplinary network in the field to provide practical outputs that will influence policy and practice.

### Centre of Excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Young people are turning away from science and maths, with consequences including a lack of public understanding of these subjects and, more urgently, a brake on the country's high-level economic growth due to a serious



**Energy solution:** A hydrogen vehicle is refuelled

skills shortage. Building on the recent award for the University to host the National Higher Education STEM programme and its longstanding strength in these subjects, we will establish a centre of excellence to attract a core team of STEM education leaders from the UK and beyond, whose work will inform and influence policy and practice across all phases of education.

### Learn more

[www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence)

'Birmingham has a rich science and technology heritage. I'm pleased that my donation will help to find a visionary leader who can attract a multidisciplinary team and coordinate this world-leading programme.'

Carol Kennedy (née Welch)  
Donor (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1972)

'Doing the research and being part of the energy solution is exciting. How often can you say that you are helping to solve a global problem?'

Dr Aman Dhir  
Research Fellow (PhD Chemical Engineering, 2008)



# Heritage and culture

The University has been culturally influential since we welcomed Sir Edward Elgar as our first Professor of Music in 1905. The Barber Institute opened in 1939 and has seen performances from the classical and operatic greats.

Our status as a top-two music department in the UK, alongside international recognition, is richly deserved and we shall continue to attract and inspire the next generation of performers through outstanding new research, teaching and performance facilities such as the 450-seat Chancellor's Court Auditorium and the refurbished Barber Concert Hall.

The University also provides opportunities to engage uniquely and significantly with culture and social heritage, and leads the way in using technology to explain the relevance of the past. Projects within the heritage and culture theme include:

#### Chancellor's Court Auditorium

Providing a 450-seat auditorium for music, opera, drama and lectures as well as state-of-the-art rehearsal and practice rooms and recording facilities, the Chancellor's Court Auditorium project will also complete the University's central, crescent-shaped Aston Webb building. Often described as the heart of the Edgbaston campus, the building is also the inspiration for all subsequent 'red brick' universities and a landmark of the University and the city.

The University has one of the top music departments in the country and the new facilities will properly reflect its standing and ensure Birmingham continues to attract and develop the top musical professionals and academics of the future

#### Centre for Heritage and Cultural Learning

The government's cultural and creative industries strategy recognises the importance of heritage in promoting public wellbeing and creating employment in media, leisure and educational activities. However much experience is hidden or isolated, making it difficult to fully explore and enjoy. As well as its own significant collections such as the Barber Institute and Mingana Collections, the University has strong links to the history of the region – from Shakespeare and Elgar to Cadbury's and Ironbridge. To bring these links together with our multidisciplinary expertise, we are creating the Centre for Heritage and Cultural Learning to create new routes into our heritage for everyone.

#### Learn more

[www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence)

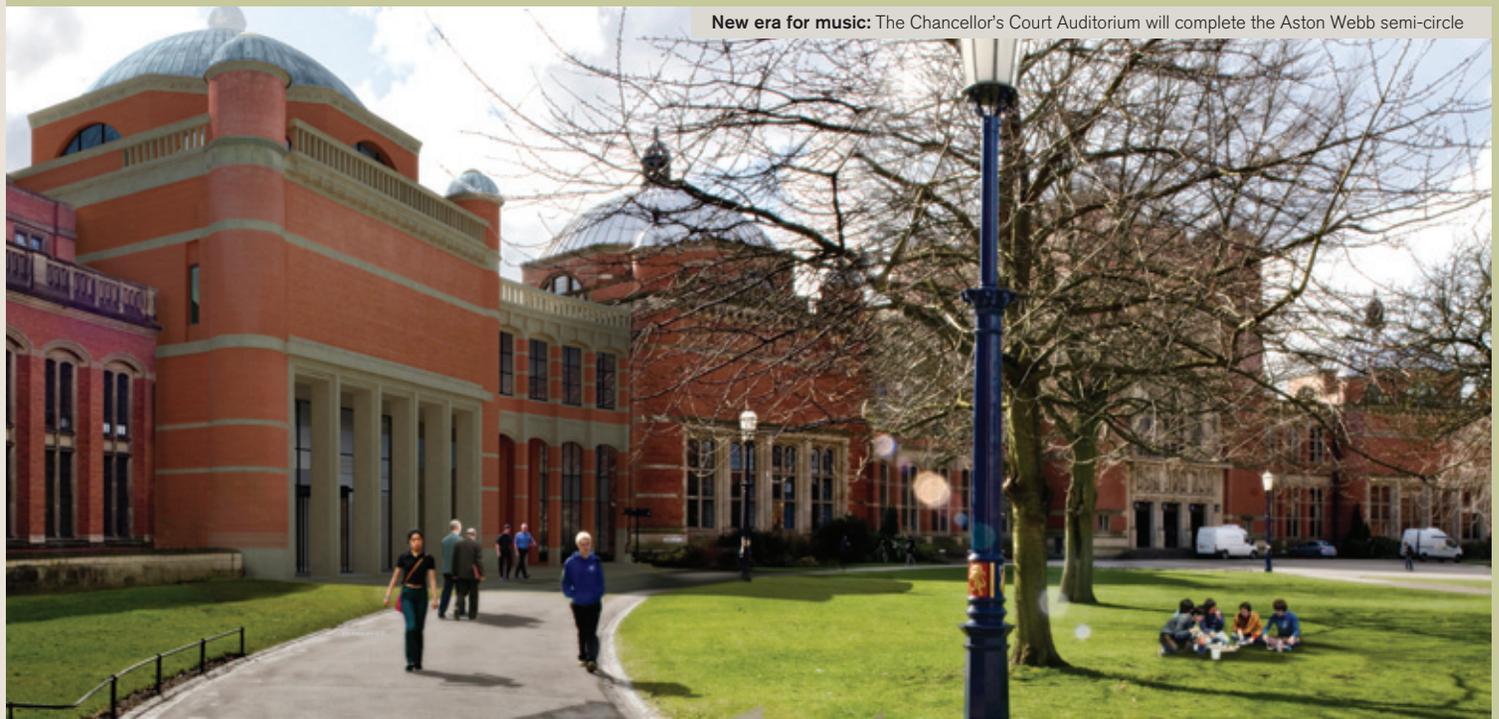
'I'm excited by the University of Birmingham's Chancellor's Court project – as a centre of excellence for talented musicians and as a venue which opens up music-making to the wider community.'

Sir Simon Rattle  
Principal Conductor of the Berliner Philharmoniker and formerly of the CBSO (DMus Honorary Degree, 1984)

'The Chancellor's Court project adds to our heritage, brings vital rehearsal and performance facilities for our orchestras and choirs, and provides purpose-built accommodation for research and teaching in our world-class music department.'

Professor John Whenham,  
Donor and Head of Music

**New era for music:** The Chancellor's Court Auditorium will complete the Aston Webb semi-circle



# Leaders of tomorrow

The University has always been committed to providing opportunity to those with the talent and determination to succeed. When most other UK universities rejected a young Sir Paul Nurse, Birmingham saw his potential. He is now a Nobel Prize winner for his work in cancer research.

To ensure no one is dissuaded from coming to Birmingham by their financial situation and to attract the very best undergraduate and postgraduate talent, the University offers a range of scholarships. They draw the very best students to Birmingham from the city, the UK and overseas, and contribute to the University's thriving, diverse and intellectually stimulating community. The campaign will support the leaders of tomorrow through:

#### Access to Birmingham (A2B) Scholarships

Through A2B, we partner schools who do not historically send many students on to higher education, helping their most able students realise their potential. Often these students have no family history of higher education and might not have even considered university in their future. Acknowledged as a UK leader, the scheme offers an A2B Scholarship worth £1,200 a year to those students who meet our stringent standard entry requirements to ease the financial impact of university.

#### Excellence Scholarships

Birmingham has traditionally been extremely strong in challenging subjects such as mathematics, engineering and the sciences, making us well placed to attract the very best undergraduates. More people studying these subjects means more teachers for

future generations and increased scientific and commercial productivity, innovation and creativity, directly benefiting the country's economy. Research shows talent-based scholarships attract the best to these subjects, so Birmingham will offer £5,000 a year to the cream of undergraduates with the aim of creating a system akin to the University of Oxford's world-renowned Rhodes Scholarships.

#### Postgraduate Scholarships

Debt from undergraduate degree courses affects student decisions about whether

to pursue postgraduate study or a career, even potentially removing further study as an option. Attractive postgraduate scholarships are therefore vital to support a 'stream of excellence', through which the brightest and best students can progress at the University without the burden of further debt, and to make Birmingham the destination of choice for the best young researchers in the world.

#### Learn more

[www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence)

'Postgraduate scholarships will make a very real impact on the lives of students here.'

Steve Allmark,  
Head of Postgraduate Recruitment

**Talent and determination:** A2B scholarship recipient Adnan Shabir, 2nd Year BSc Mathematics with Business Management



'Students from more challenging backgrounds with no family history of higher education like mine often do not have the support to achieve top A-level grades. A2B works to raise their aspirations.'

Martin Devenish  
Donor (BCom Industrial, Economic and Business Studies, 1986)

## The year in sport

UBSport scholar Tommy Langford triumphed in his senior England boxing debut in front of a crowd of thousands at an Amateur Boxing International event in December. The second year Sport and Exercise Sciences student beat Germany's former European silver medallist Taira Bukurim in the 69kg category. In his biggest bout to date, the 19-year-old's 12-5 victory helped England to a 5-4 win overall.

In February, Barbara Slater (BA Physical Education, 1981) was appointed the first female Director of Sport at the BBC. A former British Olympic gymnast, Barbara has held senior roles in the production teams covering many of the BBC's biggest sports events, including Wimbledon and the Olympics. She will oversee BBC Sport's coverage of next year's Winter Olympics and World Cup.

The Birmingham Lions American football team lifted the National Championship trophy for the second year running when they beat Newcastle in the final in April. The University of Birmingham side progressed through to the play-offs easily having led their conference league in the British University American Football League all season, scoring 502 points, over 350 more than the second place team, and conceding only 28.

A group of golfers made history by becoming the first women-only team to qualify and become World Student Matchplay Champions. University of Birmingham Sport students Lucy Williams, Sian James, Charlotte Hope and Lauren Spray (below) travelled to Inglostadt, Munich, in June where they battled it out against 26 men's and mixed university teams from all over the world to make the final and beat the home favourite.



Former UBSport Rugby Club member Phil Pask (BA Physical Education, 1981) was senior physiotherapist for the England Lions Rugby team in South Africa in June. It was his second tour with the Lions as he went to New Zealand with them in 2005.

Elsewhere in the world of rugby James Rodwell (BCom Commerce, 2005) played for the England Sevens team and is currently contracted to Moseley RFC in the Midlands.

Chrissie Wellington (BSc Geography, 1998) broke the longstanding women's race record in a time of 8:54:02 to take home her third Ironman World Champion crown. She beat the old record of 8:55:28 set in 1992 by Paul Newby-Fraser's mark at the 2009 event in Hawaii.

Hockey Olympian Simon Mantell (BCom Commerce, 2007, below) and teammates including James Fair (BSc Geology and Geography, 2003) and Richard Lane (BSc Sports and Materials Science, 2005) returned to campus for a series of test matches against India in July. England won the series 3-1, 3-4, 3-2.



Usain Bolt, the world champion athlete who is officially the world's fastest man, will be preparing for the London 2012 Olympic Games in Birmingham. The Jamaican track and field team will be using facilities on campus during their pre-Olympic training camp following negotiations led by Birmingham City Council in partnership with the University.

## Some of the best gifts come in small packages

Every gift to the University really does make a huge difference.



Donations to the University of Birmingham Fund give us the freedom to invest in creative and innovative ideas that have an immediate impact on the campus environment, teaching and learning facilities, and activities available to enhance the student experience at Birmingham.

Find out more about how you can make a very real difference at [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/circlesofinfluence) where you can also donate online, or alternatively simply complete and return the form on page 39.



# The arts' leading lady takes centre stage

With achievements including taking the English National Opera to Glastonbury and directing the UK's highest ever grossing film, Phyllida Lloyd (BA English and Drama, 1979) is a classic example of overnight success that's taken three decades' hard graft.

Despite directing the uber-blockbuster *Mamma Mia* – the biggest grossing film of all time at the UK box office and the UK's bestselling DVD ever – Phyllida Lloyd is a rare interviewee. With an impressively prolific but versatile CV, the 52-year-old started directing before she was out of a school uniform, yet she is intensely modest when it comes to her accomplishments, using words such as 'luck' and 'opportunity' and explaining that too many people inspire her to even begin to list.

Named as one of Britain's 100 most influential gay and lesbian people by the *Independent* newspaper in 2009, she describes herself as: 'a typical Gemini. Very tense and very relaxed. Very happy

#### Learn more

About music at the University:

[www.music.bham.ac.uk](http://www.music.bham.ac.uk)

About Professor Muhammad Yunus, the subject of Phyllida's next film project:

[www.muhammadyunus.org](http://www.muhammadyunus.org)

and very sad. I can be very controlling but another part of me revels in letting go of the reins and hoping other people will solve the problems.'

Although *Mamma Mia* (and the hugely popular stage version, which Phyllida also directed from its launch in 1999) is undoubtedly her highest-profile success to date, she has helmed productions as diverse as classic comedy *The School for Scandal*, Greek tragedy *Medea* and modern thriller *Six Degrees of Separation* everywhere from the fringes to the Royal National Theatre. But it wasn't always life off-stage that appealed.

'I left school wanting to become an actress but my mother dissuaded me from going to drama school on the grounds that a degree would be 'something to fall back on,' she remembers with a hint of wryness. 'But my degree from Birmingham gave me three years in which I discovered that, rather than being an actress, I was much more suited to the role of director. It represented an all-important time to work out who I was or might become.'

After graduating from Birmingham, Phyllida spent five years working in BBC television drama before winning a bursary from the Arts Council of Great Britain to be Trainee Director at the Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich. The work that followed took her everywhere from her home town of Bristol to the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, eventually moving from theatrical to operatic productions.

Then in 2004, Phyllida took a literal step into leftfield when she staged the English National Opera's production of Wagner's *Valkyrie* at the Glastonbury Festival. 'We were excited but apprehensive,' she remembers. 'It's hard to edit Wagner and we had to ask the audience to listen to a very quiet philosophical scene as well as the more popular section. You could hear a pin drop in this vast field of people and at the end, the crowd went mad. The material and the audience just came together in an explosive, unexpected combustion.'

This resolve to broaden the arts' accessibility is strengthened by frequent working sojourns to the US. Phyllida explains: 'Having just worked on Broadway and watched a clutch of British directors, designers, sound technicians and lighting designers – who all gained their training and experience in state-subsidised theatre – sweep the board at theatre's Tony Awards, I am conscious of what Britain still has and what the US lacks. This state funding allows for experiment and innovation and it's harder to do that in a purely commercial market. That said, there is a philanthropic tradition in the US going back to the 19th century that we have lost, and huge and exciting cultural contributions are paid for by this private sector.'

'We have to cling on, at all costs, to state

'Directing a play is an intimate experience. Once you have the theatre, the play and the actors, there is very little that can inhibit you.'

subsidy in the arts,' she continues, her passion for the topic clear. 'It was once a given but now it's being eroded and it seems to me that only through state subsidy can we avoid a completely London-centric cultural world. We are also encumbered by crumbling theatre buildings that people are frightened or uninspired to enter, so we must keep on investing in architecture to make the spaces in which art happens truly enticing. Music, particularly, really can cross all racial, social, cultural and generational divides and lobbying for its centrality in our children's education is crucial.'

'When I look back at the eclectic, eccentric, unique, if unbalanced curriculum of my secondary school, I quake when I think how much teachers have to achieve now just in the name of targets, how little space there must be to risk going blindly down byroads to give young spirits an unexpected adventure. The arts seem to have to squeeze themselves into very small pockets and corners and we should all be fighting to expand them.'

For Phyllida, part of that battle is a leadership role supporting the University's new Chancellor's Court Auditorium, which will complete the Aston Webb building and include a 450-seat auditorium for concerts and performances. The project aims to create a centre of excellence that opens up music-making to the wider community, in a rather smaller form of Phyllida's achievement in taking musical theatre to the global mainstream with the film version of *Mamma Mia*.

But despite the triumph of the stage version, even Phyllida herself surely didn't anticipate

quite how hugely successful her first feature film would be. So how was the transition?

'Directing a play is an intimate and comparatively flexible experience. Once you have the theatre, the play and the actors, there is very little that can inhibit you. It takes patience and a lot of listening and waiting for the thing to emerge. A film on the scale of *Mamma Mia* is a gigantic operation, whole armies of people are involved in making it. You can't wait for something to happen on a movie set, you have to bring back Olympic gold medals every day and go on doing it, sometimes for months.'

'There are all kinds of overlaps between the two mediums and my experience with working with actors and collaborating on large-scale projects, in opera for example, stood me in good stead. Curiously the editing process felt more like a theatre rehearsal. The actors weren't actually alive but their performances were evolving day by day. It was two years of extraordinary hard work and pressure and I've been surprised and delighted at its success.'

So with *Mamma Mia* firmly established as a cinematic record-breaker, what's next for Ms Lloyd? A predictably unpredictable project, of course. 'I'm currently researching a film inspired by the life of Nobel Prize-winner Professor Muhammad Yunus, one of the pioneers of micro lending to the world's poorest women.'

'Yunus has thrown down the gauntlet to all of us. How to live our lives. If the poorest of the poor can transform their worlds, what excuse is there for the rest of us? This is an astonishing story of not taking 'no' for an answer.'

## Phyllida Lloyd at a glance

**Born:** 17 June 1957, Nempnett Thrubwell near Bristol

**Education/early life:** Educated at Lawnside School, Great Malvern, Worcestershire, graduated in 1979 with a BA in English and Drama from the University of Birmingham

**Career:** After working in BBC television drama for five years, began her theatre career after winning a bursary to become Trainee Director at the Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich. She has directed plays everywhere from the Royal Shakespeare Company to the Royal National Theatre and her first feature film, *Mamma Mia*,

overtook *Titanic* to become the UK's biggest grossing film of all time

**Reputation:** Despite being one of the country's leading stage directors, *Opera* magazine once described her as 'devoid of pretension or side'. Named as one of Britain's 100 most influential gay and lesbian people by the *Independent* newspaper in 2009

**Enjoys:** Running, music, cooking, and boating and sitting looking out to sea with a good book  
**Best advice to break into the arts:** At the start of your career, be prepared to just do the thing again and again until someone takes notice and offers you a job



# UNRAVELLING AUTISM

Imagine a world where no one speaks your language and everyone behaves in a way that you can't understand or relate to.

That feeling of confusion, anxiety and isolation is a daily reality, to varying degrees, for the estimated 300,000 adults and one in every 100 children living with autism in England.

Often described as being on a spectrum due to the huge variations in its severity, autism is found in every ethnic group and country worldwide. A definitive answer as to its causes is still unknown and while for some it presents significant difficulties during childhood and on into adulthood, others feel it is society's response to autism that is the problem.

'At root, autism is a social disability that presents difficulties picking up the cues on which interaction is based,' explains Dr Mitzi Waltz of the School of Education. 'This then affects the way people respond, which can include prejudice and discrimination, and that's obviously where problems arise.'

Around the University, researchers are exploring everything from the causes of autism and the benefits of its early identification to the ways in which educators can support children and young people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Biosciences' Dr Rosemary Waring identified a biochemical difference in some children with autism for the first time 20 years ago. 'We found that autistic children often had dramatically lower levels of sulphate in their body – around one sixth of the normal level,' she says. 'Previously, most parents had been told it was their fault and offered no help, but our work started to shift opinion towards a medical cause.'

Having identified this lack of sulphate, Dr Waring looked at how levels could be increased. 'It turned out to be very difficult

but we came up with the idea of Epsom Salt baths. I later received a call from the mother of an autistic child in Australia saying her son had spent his first three years screaming and hitting his head against a wall. After introducing these baths, he was quiet and calm and she'd been able to take him out for the first time.

'Discovering this biochemical link could eventually enable us to identify autistic children very early in life and use therapeutic measures to prevent autism from developing as it would otherwise have done.'

Dr Waring's work is part of a growing body of evidence on the biological processes at work in autism, which in turn contribute to autistic behavioural differences. For example, scientists in the School of Psychology are working with babies as young as six months old to investigate ways in which the brains of autistic children may develop and act differently. As autism has strong familial links, the team works with babies who have an autistic sibling, using EEG technology to record their brain activity during tasks such as simple motion detection and face versus object processing.

Dr Joe McCleery says: 'We set out to find impairments in the visual pathways of some infants who had an older sibling diagnosed with autism but we actually found enhancements in both motion detection and object processing. Past research has shown that people diagnosed with autism have difficulties with social processing such as reading facial expressions, but they are often also very good at solving some non-social tasks such as finding a single tilted line presented in a field of many horizontal lines.'

'We are the first to discover enhanced non-social brain processing in infants at risk for autism, but the fact that we also found no impairments in social brain areas suggests that very early risk for autism may involve non-social enhancements first, followed by social processing impairments later in those infants who go on to develop autism.'

'Our work aims to enable earlier diagnosis, in turn allowing earlier intervention. People with mild autism often develop creative strategies for coping but up to 40% of autistic people have an IQ of 70 or below, meaning they often find it more difficult to find a way around the social and communication problems they experience. That's where things get very difficult including, for example, the behavioural problems prevalent in autistic children.'

In fact, a substantial number of children and adults on the autism spectrum exhibit behaviour including self injury, aggression and destruction, and researchers elsewhere in Psychology are focused on preventing these

behaviours developing. Professor Chris Oliver says: 'Medication does not work and effective behavioural interventions are expensive, time-consuming and difficult to implement, becoming more so as children get older and behaviour becomes more ingrained. Our aim is to create a short and widely accessible screen to identify children most at risk of developing these damaging behaviours, thus enabling earlier intervention and, in time, reducing stress on the children, their families and support services.'

Once autism has been diagnosed, continuing support in many forms for the individual and their family can be vital. The School of Education has led a programme of autism research for more than a decade, including the establishment of the Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER) in 2007.

In 2008 the ACER team worked with the government-funded Autism Education Trust to deliver a report on educational provision for children and young people on the autism spectrum in England. Dr Waltz says: 'We talked to parents, children, teachers, headteachers, autistic adults and support organisations and found many examples of good practice. A key role for the Trust and for ACER is to disseminate evidence-based information on a national basis so that all families and children receive a good quality service.'

ACER was also recently commissioned by the government's Department of Children, Schools and Families to produce a DVD and web-based resource for all early years settings and mainstream primary and secondary schools in England. The latter resource will also be given to all Initial Teacher Training providers to ensure all student teachers have a basic understanding of the autism spectrum before beginning their career. The two resources can be accessed via the ACER website.

'This is the first time a programme such as this has been produced in the UK and given out free of charge to all schools and early years settings,' Dr Waltz explains. 'It includes training for early years practitioners, who are well placed to notice undiagnosed autism at an early stage of education, and it shows primary and secondary practitioners the difference it can make when staff understand the perspective of pupils on the autism spectrum.'

But the research and treatment of autism can be a controversial issue, so how do those directly affected feel? Brenda O'Reilly, whose son Alistair was diagnosed with autism aged four, says: 'Living with autism on a daily basis is very hard, with strict routines to follow like the same food every day. As Ali's parents, we

cannot go out together when he's at home and hardly ever go away together. It is hard for us but it must be very, very hard for him.'

'I believe research into autism is of the utmost importance because we need to know what is happening in order to treat the condition, if it is treatable, and prevent this happening to others. If not now, then as science advances. Some may say that autism should not be researched but I am afraid I cannot agree.'

Dr Waring adds: 'I am hopeful that we will find the causes of autism and certainly that we will be able to help with the problems it causes. The combination of work we're doing at the University is moving in the right direction and my hope is that in ten to 15 years' time, autism will be a condition like diabetes. It's always there but it can be managed.'

#### Learn more

About ACER:

[www.education.bham.ac.uk/research/acer/](http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/research/acer/)

About research within Psychology:

[www.cndd.bham.ac.uk/projects/](http://www.cndd.bham.ac.uk/projects/) and  
[www.cogdev.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml](http://www.cogdev.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml)

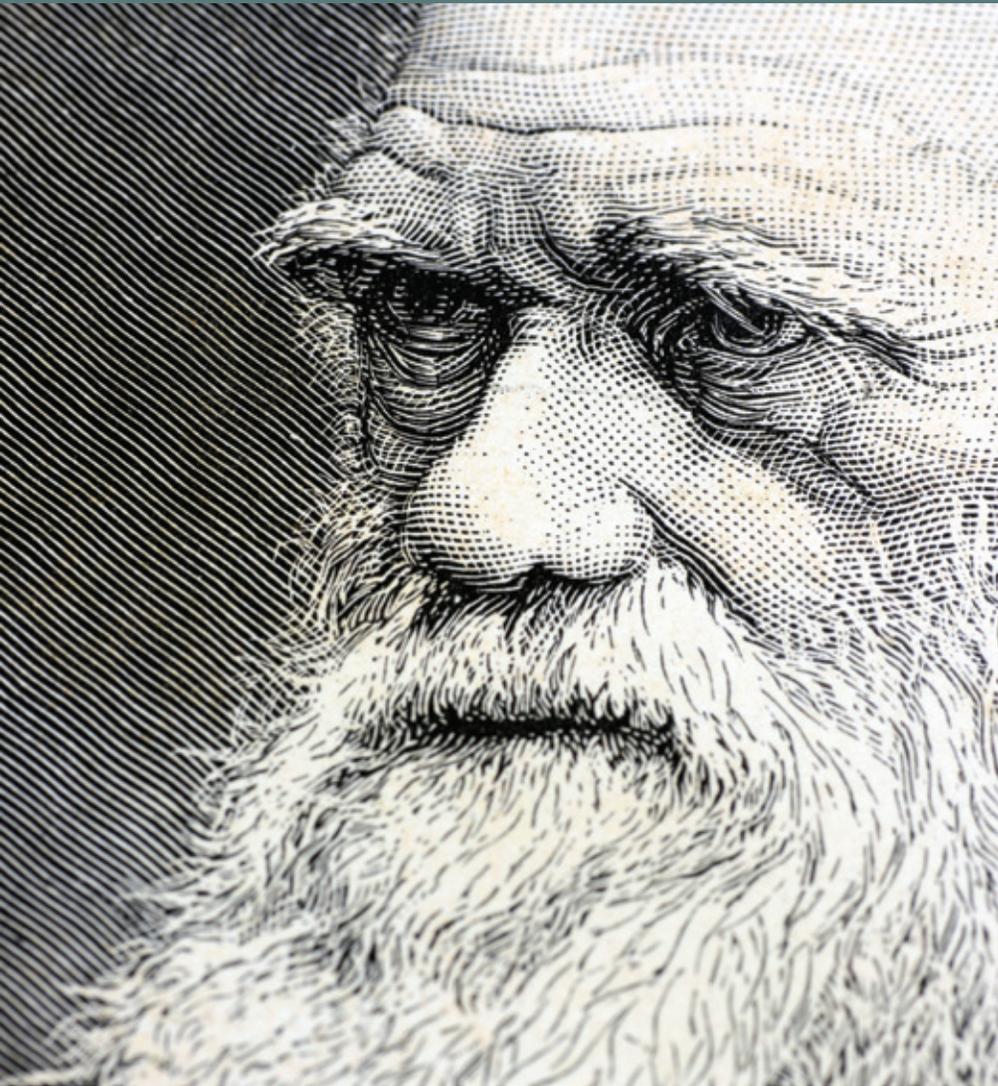
## Fact file

- The National Autistic Society describes autism as 'a lifelong developmental disability'. It affects the way in which a person communicates with and relates to other people and the world around them
- Although autism has a genetic basis, it is also believed to be influenced by environmental factors
- The word spectrum is often used to describe variations in the severity of autism, but all autistic people share three main areas of difficulty: social communication, social interaction and social imagination
- An estimated 1% of children and young people in England are somewhere on the autism spectrum\*
- Autism Unravelled is the leading UK charity dedicated to investigating biomedical issues in autism spectrum disorders

#### Learn more

[www.autism-unravelled.org](http://www.autism-unravelled.org)  
[www.nas.org.uk/](http://www.nas.org.uk/)

\*Source: Autism Education Trust



Bicentenary: An engraving of Charles Darwin

# EVOLVING DARWIN

In the 200th anniversary year of Charles Darwin's birth, his evolutionary theories remain at the cornerstone of modern biology. Here, we celebrate the bicentenary with three very different perspectives on Darwin and evolution.

While Dr Jeremy Pritchard describes how evolution underpins research at Birmingham, Dr Susannah Thorpe outlines her own groundbreaking theories on the development of human walking.

Finally, author and alumna Emma Darwin, Charles' great-great granddaughter, explains that art and science are intrinsically connected, particularly in the Darwin family...

## Darwins: a legacy in science and the arts

Emma Darwin (BA Drama  
and Theatre Arts, 1986)

People think that there's a gulf between scientific and artistic practice. Some even assume the title of my novel, *The Mathematics of Love*, expresses that. But Charles Darwin's Wedgwood heredity combines aesthetics with science, and his artist granddaughter Gwen Raverat linked her creativity to a scientific kind of observing: 'learning to see, to know what one is looking at with one's inner mind: not in gaining experience, but in losing it.' Charles himself said that scepticism – pre-judging things – is 'a frame of mind which I believe to be injurious to the progress of science'. As, indeed, it is to the practice of art.

Of Charles and Emma Darwin's children, William was a banker, George an astronomer, Frank a botanist and biographer, Horace a Royal Engineer, and Leonard founded The Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company, while Henrietta edited and published *The Descent of Man* and her mother's letters.

Gwen Raverat wrote of them that they were like creative artists: 'the sense of style, of proportion; the passionate love of their subject... the complete integrity and the willingness to take infinite trouble to perfect any piece of work.' The family keeps this balance between artistic and scientific professions, with the Darwin family tree including distinguished poet Francis Cornford and composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, alongside musicians, stockbrokers, biologists, painters, mathematicians and writers.

It's not always straightforward. The truth of art is different from the truth of science: one's a-rational, un-logical creative processes can be broken on the wheel of ruthlessly reasonable thought. I had to go beyond history to write my novel of the Wars of the Roses, *A Secret Alchemy*, but when I do, or Frances Cornford writes of a guitar as a woman's body, it's like Einstein imagining himself as a proton: the same human skill, only the purpose is different.

- Emma's first novel *The Mathematics of Love* was shortlisted for several prestigious literary prizes. Her second book, *A Secret Alchemy*, is available now.  
[www.emmadarwin.com](http://www.emmadarwin.com)

## Fascinating evolution

Dr Jeremy Pritchard, School of Biosciences

Darwin's radical ideas were Birmingham born and bred. Both his grandfathers, Josiah Wedgwood, the potter, and Erasmus Darwin, the doctor and polymath, were influential members of the Birmingham Lunar Society, discussing and promoting the ideas of change in society that preceded those in biology.

Today evolution underpins research in the School of Biosciences. Topics as diverse as the spread of bacterial resistance to antibiotics through to the formation and extinction of whole species under climate change are actively studied in the School.

Bacteria are subject to the same evolutionary laws as all other organisms on the planet. The discovery of antibiotics has had a positive influence on human health but is being undermined by the ability of bacterial populations to evolve resistance to these medicines. Bacterial genomes are subject to random mutations, some of these genetic changes allow the bacteria that possess them to overcome the effects of the antibiotic, while those that do not die. The fitter, resistant bacteria reproduce and so the genes for resistance increase in the population, resulting in the serious medical problem that exists today.

Work in the School of Biosciences is engaged in the arms race against antibiotic resistant bacteria, designing new antibiotics by studying the biochemistry of antibiotic metabolism in *Pseudomonas* species to help generate new antibiotics that can be used against bacteria such as the superbug MRSA.

Evolution is inherently fascinating and provides a vehicle to enthuse people about science and engage people of all ages. The School runs a comprehensive outreach and Public Understanding of Science programme, including components supporting the teaching of evolution.

Our research is widely disseminated: Birmingham members of the Society of Experimental Biology organised a scientific session at the annual meeting in Glasgow bringing together topics of plants, animals and cells using systems ranging from genes, proteins, cells and organisms to ecology. In a lecture entitled *Am I an Ape?* Dr Susannah Thorpe and I asked the audience to participate in a series of exercises examining our relationship with our ape cousins.

Another highlight of this Year of Darwin was the project *The Eye of the Beholder* by

Biosciences artist in residence Franziska Schenk. Inspired by Darwin's iconic description of the development of the eye, Fran is producing a series of works forming the centrepiece for public engagement activities in the Year of Darwin 2009 and beyond. The series of paintings draws on novel biomimetic materials and methods that mirror the process of evolution.

Our efforts to promote understanding of science and evolution are well received and contribute to education at all levels. However, you are no doubt aware of the 'debates' between science and creationism. It is perhaps gratifying that our efforts occasionally induce reaction from these quarters.

Happily, most recognise that there is no conflict between science and religion, with clear separation of the physical and spiritual world. We continue to promote good science and counter the arguments of those suggesting alternatives to evolution of creationism, irreducible complexity and intelligent design. At the age of 200 we think Charles Darwin would be pleased with the development of his ideas and the ongoing role of the University of Birmingham in their evolution.

## Walking the walk: the evolution of human bipedalism

Dr Susannah Thorpe, Lecturer in Locomotor Ecology and Biomechanics, School of Biosciences

Walking with an upright body on two legs (bipedalism) is thought to be the first anatomical adaptation that made human ancestors unique from the ancestors of our closest living relative, the chimpanzee. Understanding how and why bipedalism evolved underlies our understanding of all human evolution and not surprisingly it has been a subject of considerable debate.

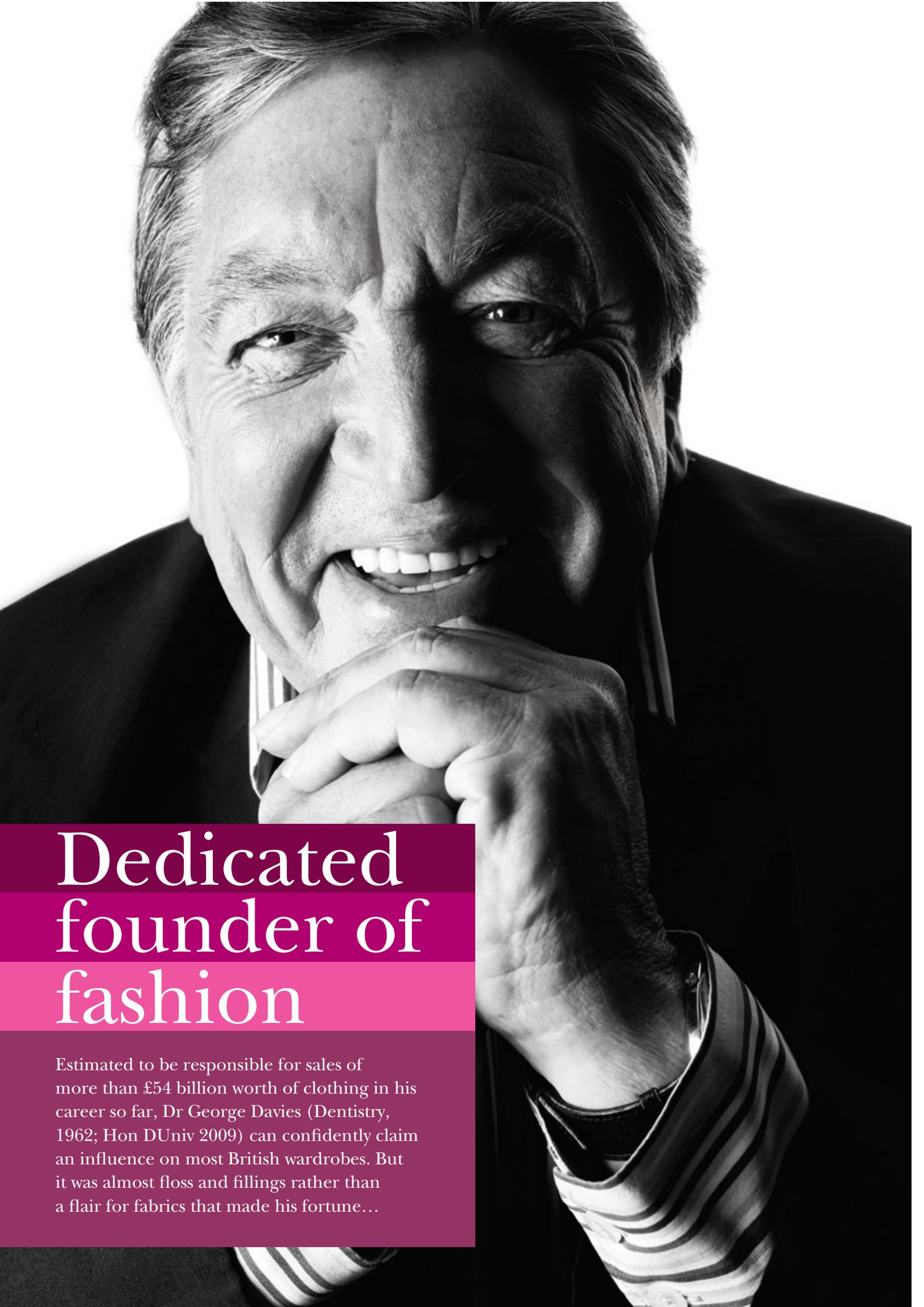
Over the past 50 years many theories have been proposed as to why bipedalism evolved. For example, researchers have proposed that human ancestors, smaller and weaker than the other apes, were forced out of receding forests between five and ten million years ago, and landed, rather fortuitously, on the banks of marine habitats where there was an abundance of accessible aquatic food resources, and where habitual bipedalism evolved in response to wading through shallow water while

foraging. Though compelling, the Aquatic Ape theory lacks any fossil evidence in its support. This example demonstrates the limitations of speculating; we can only look at the role of bipedalism today and backdate to six million years ago, an approach that clearly ignores the way in which evolution occurs.

As a consequence, modern research has started to focus more on how bipedalism evolved. The traditional hypothesis argues that, because chimpanzees and gorillas knuckle-walk (on all fours but with their fingers partially flexed) on the ground, then the origins of bipedalism must be understood in this context. Others have noted that when climbing up vertical tree trunks, the great apes extend their legs in a manner that would 'preadapt' the body for bipedalism; that is to say that the adaptation of bipedalism would be a relatively easy affair for an animal that was good at vertical climbing. Although these theories have dominated discussion for the past 30 years, the evidence for both is highly contested and relatively weak. Darwin in fact was probably rather closer to the truth when he observed in *The Descent of Man* that: 'Monkeys exhibit a manner of progression intermediate between that of a quadruped and a biped, but...the anthropomorphous apes approach in structure more nearly to the bipedal than to the quadrupedal type'.

Through studying the locomotion of wild orangutans in Indonesia, my research has shown that orangutans, another close relative of humans, use bipedalism when moving in the trees to access the most flexible branches at the fringes of tree crowns, where the majority of tasty fruits and the narrowest gaps between tree crowns (necessary for safe arboreal travel) are situated. Since all the great apes exhibit bipedalism in some form, we have suggested that bipedality was probably present in the common ancestor of all the great apes, some 16–20 million years ago, meaning that bipedalism is not in fact a defining feature of humanity, but rather a general ape adaptation that has simply become more specialised in humans.

Darwin observed in *The Descent of Man* that: 'the orang... is one of the most peculiar and aberrant forms to be found in the Order'. It is rather pleasant, therefore, that they have emerged as one of the best living analogies for such a crucial component of human evolution. This research has radically changed the way we view human evolution, since it necessitates a scenario in which chimpanzees and gorillas evolved from a somewhat orangutan/human form, rather than the traditional view that humans are more 'evolved' than the other apes. It is thus an exciting time to be a researcher in human evolution and we have many questions that we still need to answer.



# Dedicated founder of fashion

Estimated to be responsible for sales of more than £54 billion worth of clothing in his career so far, Dr George Davies (Dentistry, 1962; Hon DUniv 2009) can confidently claim an influence on most British wardrobes. But it was almost floss and fillings rather than a flair for fabrics that made his fortune...

# 'I'm only happy when I'm creating.'

As founder of three bestselling UK fashion labels, retail legend George Davies has changed the country's shopping habits more than once, ringing up billions of pounds worth of sales along the way.

With his catchphrase of 'retail is detail', the father of seven created high street chain Next in the 1980s, fashion brand George at Asda in the 1990s and the Per Una label for Marks & Spencer most recently, all with no formal training in fashion.

In fact, George's interest in fashion was first sparked in childhood when his mother Mary would make dresses at home rather than buy poor quality clothes from the high street. Years later, aged 22, he began his career as a stock controller in the children's sock department at Littlewoods where he learned a few fundamental points of successful retailing.

'In Manchester during the Whitsun holidays, children dressed in white for the Whit Walks, so sales of white ankle socks shot up,' he remembers. 'I had only sent ten pairs and it nearly cost me my job. It taught me that in retail, every store is different and you have to understand those local differences and plan your stock accordingly.'

His time at the catalogue store also fired his entrepreneurial spirit. 'I saw men who had been there 40 years doing the same job as me and it seemed like they had settled. I didn't want to be doing the same job ten years down the line.' True to his word, the native Liverpoolian quit Littlewoods aged 30 to set up a mail-order school uniform company called Schoolcare. 'I always describe Schoolcare as my postgraduate course in business training,' he says. 'It was the greatest learning I had in my life.'

But what of his time as an undergraduate at Birmingham? He came to the University to study dentistry in 1961 but left after his first year. 'Joining retail was a massive gain for dentistry,' he says with a grin. 'I wish I had been at the University for much longer though as I had great fun and feel very proud to be able to say I went to Birmingham.'

'It was a big change in my life as I'd never been away from home or lived by myself. Even then, I was a man for fashion and brought eight suits with me and hung them all around the walls of my room. I can still picture the look of shock on our landlady's face. I never saw another student wearing a suit the whole time I was there. I got myself a Vespa scooter too so I didn't have to get buses. It's safe to say I wasn't a typical student.'

That non-conformist approach to matters sartorial was to become the Davies way of doing business. In 1981, he was enlisted by designer and retailer Sir Terence Conran to

revitalise a chain of struggling menswear stores called J Hepworth. His ideas included changing the name to Next – 'the idea of looking ahead to the next trend' – and introducing coordinated collections of clothes, shoes and accessories to encourage customers to buy a whole outfit rather than just one piece. Now standard practice but revolutionary at the time, Davies branded this his 'total concept look'.

In the following years, Davies added interiors, childrenswear and home shopping through the Next Directory, transforming Next into one of the UK's most successful high street chains.

He says: 'I am only happy when I'm creating. Building the Next brand from scratch was an incredible experience. I wanted to get the business back on track without taking it apart as I felt that was the right thing to do and I have a strong sense of what is morally correct. Although I'm passionate about what I want to achieve, I'm also a very caring and loyal person and still have many of the same people working with me as I did years ago.'

The second Davies-orchestrated shift in the country's shopping habits came in 1990 with the launch of George at Asda, the UK's first supermarket clothing brand. The 67-year-old recalls: 'I knew the high street was changing and I thought women with babies needed somewhere they could park easily and just put their kids in a trolley.'

But cynicism was widespread that people simply wouldn't be prepared to buy clothes from a supermarket. Archie Norman, Asda Chief Executive at the time of the George launch, once said: 'Everyone thought it would be impossible (but) George grasped the fact it had to be value and understood that because it was a supermarket, it had to be a brand name, not Asda.'

After a low-key start in just five Asda stores, the brand rapidly attracted a loyal following and, following Asda's takeover by the world's biggest retailer Wal-Mart, is now available in seven countries around the world with annual global sales of £2 billion.

George left Asda in 2000 and was quickly signed up by struggling high street giant Marks & Spencer. Although a well-recognised and trusted brand name, sales were falling, particularly in the core department of womenswear which was failing to appeal to younger shoppers. Inspired by Italian style and exclusive to M&S, George came up with Per Una, meaning for one (woman). Then Chief Executive of M&S, Roger Holmes, once said: 'It was absolutely fundamental in the resurgence of the core appeal of womenswear.' Asked if it saved the company, he replied: 'Yes, I don't think that overstates the case.'

Despite selling Per Una to M&S for £125 million in 2004, Davies stayed on as chairman of the brand until November 2008. Just seven months later in June 2009, he announced his decision to launch GIVE, meaning George IV – his fourth large fashion venture. Described by George as 'affordable luxury' and made with the best Italian fabrics, some observers have questioned his decision to launch a luxury concept in a recession. He responds: 'Of course I am concerned about the risks but you must be confident enough about your concept and how it addresses the gap in the market to believe it will succeed.'

Having previously claimed he 'knows more about women's bodies than most people in the world', and deliberately targeting the sector with the largest growth (women aged 30-50), the retail icon is again staking his reputation on his instincts and clearly relishing the challenge.

'I love what I do,' he says with a broad grin. 'I feel sorry for people who don't because if you don't have a passion for your work, it's a chore. I want people to leave my shops feeling they've had a great experience and bought something that will make them feel good. That's my goal.'

## George Davies at a glance

**Born:** 29 October 1941, Crosby, Liverpool

**Family:** Three times divorced with five daughters, two sons and six grandchildren

**Education/early life:** Attended Bootle Grammar School and represented England under-18s at football. Began a dentistry degree at Birmingham in 1961 but left after his first year and joined Littlewoods

**Career:** Creator of Next in the 1980s, George at Asda in the 1990s and, Per Una at Marks & Spencer at the turn of the century

**Reputation:** A proud Liverpoolian with a famously fiery temper and a catchphrase of 'retail is detail', he won Prima's Designer of the Decade award in 2004 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from fashion industry magazine *Drapers Record* in 2003. George is a Governor of Malvern College and the influence and benefactor behind the George Davies Centre for Retail Excellence at Heriot-Watt University

**Interests:** Sport, particularly football and golf; cars including Ferrari and Maserati

**Charity work:** Passionate supporter of several charitable causes including Birmingham Children's Hospital (after its Intensive Care Unit saved his granddaughter Evie's life in 2006); The Vascular Society; the education of under-privileged children in Asia through Chitra Lane and the Mvumi School Trust; and making life more comfortable for British soldiers injured in combat overseas

# The drama and poetry of academic life

As the University's pioneering MA in Playwriting Studies celebrates its 20th anniversary, writers Luke Kennard and Steve Waters are continuing the University's tradition of employing published authors to inspire students.



## Luke Kennard

Absurdist short fiction and poetry flows from the pen of Luke Kennard, a lecturer on the English department's BA English and Creative Writing course.

Although he dislikes being described as award-winning, Luke became the youngest ever nominee for the Forward Prize with his second title *The Harbour Beyond the Movie* in 2007 and received an Eric Gregory award for his first collection *The Solex Brothers* in 2005. His most recent book, *The Migraine Hotel*, was published in the summer.

Luke is inspired by his reading as a teenager of Kafka, and also by Russian

writers recommended by his father, who use short forms to tell a complex story in a compressed space. 'The strangeness of their writing, the humour and the dream-like weirdness of it comes through in my work. I'm not trying to emulate them, I'm taking their influence and trying to write like that about the present day,' he says.

Several of his poems feature a character called Wolf, who he describes as an equivalent of Ted Hughes' Crow but more of a comedy trickster figure. 'Wolf is something I use as a dual voice. The poems feature conversations between me and Wolf, who deliberately misunderstands things about contemporary life. The narrator starts to correct him but

Wolf is stubborn and often turns out to be right,' he says. 'In ten years' time I might have enough Wolf poems for a collection.'

When he is not teaching at Birmingham, Luke aims to write 1,000 words a day and ends up keeping about 1,000 words a week. 'Some poets write very carefully and publish a collection every six years but I want to publish every two years. It's a signpost of where your work is,' he says.

His plans for the future include completing his first novel in the next two years, going on a reading tour in America next year and doing more writing for the stage.



## Steve Waters

Playwright Steve Waters (MA Playwriting Studies, 1993) is not afraid to explore major contemporary issues; his work covers climate change, politics and immigration.

He began writing plays in the 1990s as a student on the same playwriting course he now runs for the University and his work has been staged at national theatres such as the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, Hampstead Theatre and the Donmar Warehouse in London.

*The Contingency Plan*, two plays about a potential flooding disaster performed at the Bush Theatre, London, in May, received his best reviews to date, with *the Guardian's* Michael Billington saying: 'Their virtue is that they not only act as an urgent wake-up call, but they present the issues in compelling human terms.'

Steve is currently in talks with television and radio producers about *The Contingency Plan* and is exploring ideas for a new play with a historical flavour for the Donmar Warehouse. He is also writing a book explaining his views about the process of playwriting after David Edgar, who founded Birmingham's MA course in 1989, published *How Plays Work* in the summer.

Although he would never ask his students to write like he does, Steve does encourage them to 'think big' and use their Masters year to explore subjects they might not dare to write about in another context.

'A lot of modern playwriting shrinks back from the issues Shakespeare and Brecht wrote about. If it is to survive it needs to do something nobody else is doing and make us think about the big questions in a really challenging way,' he says.

The MA Playwriting course is 20 years old next year and Steve is just one of its success stories. To celebrate the anniversary, the Drama department is hosting the 2020 playwriting conference, where 20 playwriting alumni are being invited to write short plays for undergraduates to perform.

'Every year two or three out of 14 writers go on to have their work performed in theatres and that's not to mention all those who go into radio and television. We're very proud of our former students,' he says.

'The difference between when I took the course and now is that then it was the only one of its kind and now there are postgraduate playwriting courses at several universities. We have to keep reminding people why ours was, and is, first and best.'

## Creative writing at Birmingham

The new BA in English with Creative Writing was launched in 2007 and more than 120 students are now studying on the course. Birmingham will be expanding its post-graduate creative writing portfolio with a new MA, with a proposed launch date of October 2010.

Poet Jackie Kay and award-winning novelist Catherine O'Flynn have inspired students and

staff across the University as part of a Visiting Writers' Programme organised by Dr Elsa Braekkan Payne, Director of Creative Writing.

Future events include a poetry panel and a talk by the eminent novelist and Honorary Professor of Modern English Literature David Lodge. The programme will continue representing the outward face of creative writing at Birmingham beyond 2010.

## Playwriting alumni Ones to watch

### Fraser Grace (MA Playwriting Studies, 1992; MPhil Playwriting Studies, 1997)

Fraser is best known for his award-winning play *Breakfast with Mugabe*, which was commissioned and produced by the RSC before transferring to Soho Theatre and the West End. His most recent play *The Lifesavers* was performed at Theatre 503 in London and the Mercury Theatre, Colchester last year and he also writes radio drama, opera and fiction.

### Duncan MacMillan (MPhil Playwriting Studies, 2003)

Duncan is writer in residence at the Paines Plough Theatre in London. His radio play *I Wish to Apologise*, starring Bill Nighy, was aired on Radio 4 last year and in 2006 *Monster*, based on his parents' experiences of teaching, won second prize in the Bruntwood Playwriting Competition.

### Anthony Weigh (MPhil Playwriting Studies, 2005)

Joseph Fiennes starred in the London production of the Australian-born playwright's first full-length work *2,000 Feet Away*, which explored American sex offender legislation, nominated for and winning several theatre awards. Anthony is currently writer in Residence at the National Theatre and Associate Playwright at the Bush Theatre.

### Sarah Grochala (MPhil Playwriting Studies, 2003)

*S-27*, inspired by photographs of Kmer Rouge prison victims, won the 2007 Protect the Human Playwriting Competition and was shortlisted for The King's Cross Award. The play was produced at the Finborough Theatre in June and described by *the Guardian* as 'a blistering account of the things that we will do to save our own skins, and the way the human heart betrays us'.

### Laura Lomas (MPhil Playwriting Studies, 2009)

Laura's first full-length play *Wasteland* was produced by New Perspectives in 2009. Currently on attachment with Paines Plough theatre company's Future Perfect scheme for new playwrights, she is also under commission to Hampstead Heat and Light, Nottingham Playhouse Roundabout, Oran Mor Theatre and BBC Radio 3.

# Research focus

## Caring for carers

Grief, loss, isolation and anger are just some of the emotions experienced by carers of the 700,000 people with dementia in the UK.

Broadcaster John Suchet showed how devastating seeing the person you love turn into someone who does not know you can be when he broke down in tears while telling the BBC about his wife's Alzheimer's in February. 'The Bonnie I loved has actually gone. It's as if she has died. Dementia has taken her,' he said.

Researchers at Birmingham are working to identify the problems John and carers like him face and the best ways to support them. They are led by clinical psychologist Dr Jan Oyeboode, who came to the University after 17 years with the NHS specialising in helping older people with dementia and their carers and still works as a consultant one day a week with South Birmingham Mental Health Trust.

'With a condition like dementia there are real difficulties because the person's cognitive processes are affected and the carer can start to feel they are losing them before they've died and may grieve in advance,' she says. 'That sort of discontinuity may help the carer but the problem with that is that inevitably they will lose empathy with the person with dementia and will be less able to comfort them.'

'Although the patient with dementia



Supporting carers: Admiral Nurse Ian Weatherhead with John Suchet (left)

Picture: Rhonda Smith/Minerva PRC

may behave in a very confusing way, they're actually still there inside it all. If you can try to understand the way they're behaving, you can maintain empathy in a way that helps them and bring out the best in them, and so that may help you as well.'

Support for carers and families is available from UK charities and from Admiral Nurses, specialist nurses employed by the NHS who advise on all aspects of dementia, from the best care packages to coping with behavioural changes.

A community mental health nurse by background, Ian Weatherhead (PG Diploma Criminology, 1995) became an Admiral Nurse for the Central North West London Foundation Trust in 2006. 'It is a challenging job but is more rewarding than any other job I've done,' he says.

Ian is John Suchet's Admiral Nurse and

in July was appointed as Lead Nurse for the national helpline Admiral Nursing DIRECT, which is manned by trained Admiral Nurses. Ian says: 'John talking about dementia so rawly and passionately touched a nerve with many people and helped to raise awareness of the many issues that families and carers face.'

Dr Oyeboode's research has shown that carers are more likely to have mental and physical health problems than non-carers: 'Really the health service needs to be looking after both people, not just the person who's the identified patient. Admiral Nurses and the charities For Dementia and the Alzheimer's Society are really good at providing services that provide for carers' needs and giving them opportunities to come together,' she says.

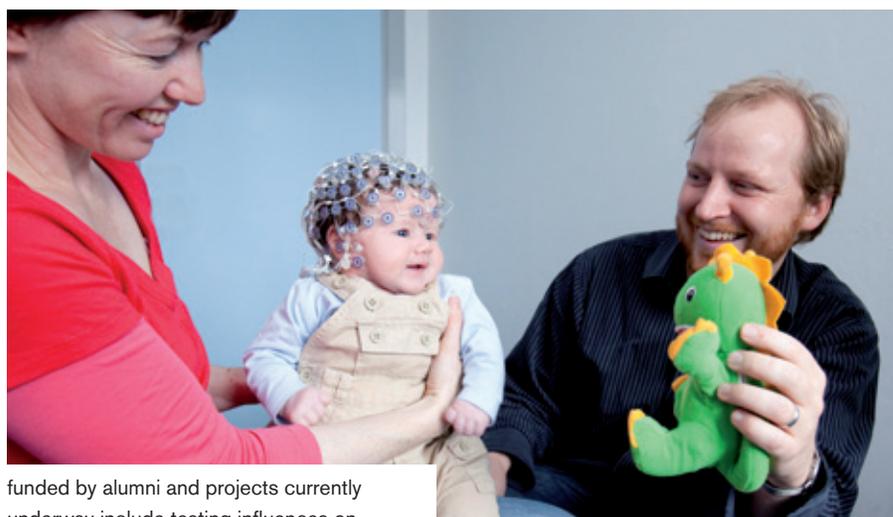
For further information about dementia, visit [www.fordementia.org.uk](http://www.fordementia.org.uk)

## Baby it's you

Psychologists are carrying out direct research with infants for the first time in the University's new multimedia Babylab.

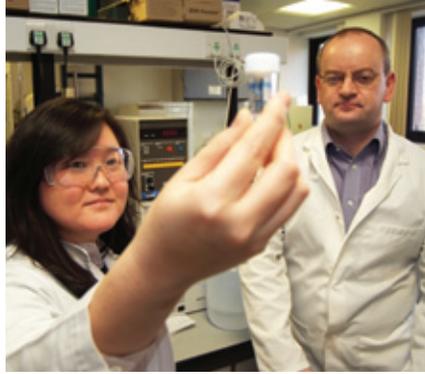
Set in a refurbished area of the Frankland Building especially designed to be family friendly, the Babylab includes a habituation lab and EEG equipment to measure brain activity. There is also an observation room with cameras so children can be watched at play and a soundproof booth to ensure sensitive experiments are not disturbed.

Undergraduate students are being recruited to help run the lab and will also help to build up a database of volunteer parents and children to participate in research. The Babylab was



Babylab: Dr Joe McCleery with mum Maria Brophy and ten-week-old Cian

funded by alumni and projects currently underway include testing influences on word learning, identifying biomarkers of autism and examining feeding behaviours.



## Centres of excellence work to save the environment

Identifying ways to save the environment is the objective of two new national research facilities at Birmingham.

Researchers in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences are examining the physical and chemical properties of nanoparticles, while in the School of Biosciences, a metabolomics facility is assessing how organisms' health relates to their habitat.

Found in everything from diesel to tennis rackets, manufactured nanoparticles have a variety of sophisticated uses. The problem for scientists working with these tiny pieces of matter is that little is known about their effects on the environment.

Jamie Lead, Professor of Environmental Nanoscience, says: 'Nanoparticles have huge potential benefits and we need to exploit this technology without damaging the environment. We're working to ensure the general public, end users in industry and policy makers are aware of any problems and to design and regulate the least damaging materials.'

Just as doctors measure naturally occurring chemicals in blood to establish our health, researchers in the metabolomics facility can conduct thousands of different tests to establish whether or not an organism is living in a healthy environment. By characterising the metabolism of animals and plants, they create a fingerprint that can be used to diagnose environmental changes.

Facility director Dr Mark Viant says: 'We've become a centre of excellence where researchers from around the country can come to use tools and seek expert opinion, and apply it to studying the effects of pollution and climate change on plant and animal health.'

The research facilities were established with funding from the Natural Environment Research Council.

Learn more about metabolomics research at Birmingham

[www.biosciences.bham.ac.uk/labs/viant/](http://www.biosciences.bham.ac.uk/labs/viant/)

For further information on the nanoparticle facility, visit

[www.gees.bham.ac.uk/research/fenac/index](http://www.gees.bham.ac.uk/research/fenac/index)

## A scholar and a gentleman

The traditional image of Shakespeare has been called into question by the discovery of a new portrait of the playwright.

Stanley Wells, Emeritus Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Birmingham and a leading Shakespeare scholar, believes the Cobbe portrait is the one true likeness of the greatest of all writers.

Named after the Irish family whose collection it had been in for 300 years, it is likely to be the only surviving portrait of Shakespeare (1564–1616) to have been painted from life.

The portrait was tested for authenticity when Alec Cobbe became convinced that a painting he saw at the National Portrait Gallery was a copy of the one in his family's collection and he consulted Professor Wells.

The Cobbe portrait is very different from the balding image of Shakespeare from the Droeshout engraving, published in 1623 at the front of the First Folio (first collected works). The Shakespeare it shows is handsome, glamorous and magnificently dressed.

'A lot of people have the wrong image of Shakespeare, and I'm pleased the picture confirms my own feeling that he was a gentleman,' Professor Wells says.

'What is certain is that the Cobbe portrait will challenge people's perception of Shakespeare and open up new investigation of his life and his relationship with his young patron, the Earl of Southampton.'

The portrait was the centrepiece of the Shakespeare Found exhibition which ran at Shakespeare's Birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon earlier this year. Professor Wells has edited a book of the same title about the relationship between Shakespeare and his patron.

Learn more about the portrait at [www.shakespearefound.org.uk](http://www.shakespearefound.org.uk) For further information about the University's Shakespeare Institute, visit [www.shakespeare.bham.ac.uk](http://www.shakespeare.bham.ac.uk)



## Skilled workforce stems from Birmingham

Encouraging workers to develop their skills is a key aim of a national programme being hosted by the University.

The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programme is a three-year, £21 million project funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils for England and Wales.

The programme will establish a growing network of higher education institutions, helping universities engage directly with employers on a regional basis to build flexible and tailored programmes of study.

Professor Nigel Weatherill, Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, led Birmingham's successful bid to host STEM.

'It is vital that we encourage universities and employers to work together to develop the skills base of those currently within the workforce; this will be crucial if the UK is to maintain an innovative national economy that is able to compete on a global scale,' he says.

Changing the way universities recruit students and deliver programmes of study in the STEM disciplines, the programme will nationally roll out activities from four discipline-based pilot projects in Chemistry, Engineering, Mathematics and Physics that have worked to widen participation among school-age students.

Another priority will be to examine the current undergraduate curriculum and explore the teaching of the critical STEM skills to ensure graduates of all ages are adequately prepared for their workplace.

## Real world mathematics

In the School of Mathematics, Head of School Professor Steve Decent is an example of an academic applying his research to solve problems in industry and business.

Steve supervises PhD students using mathematical modelling to optimise the performance of hydrogen fuel cells, which could be the clean energy of the future. This modelling can also be used to study microscopic flows of liquids and gases to improve industrial processes.

He also teaches on the MSc Mathematical Finance course, which gives graduates the skills to work in quantitative finance, investment banking and risk management.

'The good thing about being a mathematician is working with different people over different areas. We're industry driven and very outward looking,' he says.

# RINGING THE CHANGES FOR AFRICA

When Barack Obama mentioned the importance of African governance for the first time on a visit to Ghana, Dr Mo Ibrahim (PhD Electronic and Electrical Engineering, 1981) knew his influence was working. The US President's words were a clear endorsement of the telecoms billionaire's vision to promote good governance in his homeland...



'Good governance should be based on the things that citizens should expect their politicians to deliver. Infrastructure, health, education, rule of law, efficient courts, transparency or lack of corruption, safety. People should be able to exist without being mugged, women without being raped. These are the basic guides governments need.'

That is the view of Dr Mo Ibrahim, who believes the only way to solve Africa's social problems is by rewarding and celebrating strong leadership. He is so assured of this solution that his eponymous foundation awards an annual \$5 million prize to a former African leader who has demonstrated excellence in leadership.

'It's governments' responsibility to provide these key things, which are not just important in Africa, they're important everywhere, including in the private sector, but they're always overlooked,' he says. 'The financial crisis we're suffering from now is a direct result of a fantastic failure in corporate governance.'

He has every right to comment on corporate leadership, an area in which he has excelled. Formed in 1998, his company Celtel International operates in 15 African countries, covers more than a third of the continent's population and has invested more than \$750 million in Africa. In 2005, Celtel was sold to MTC Kuwait for \$3.4 billion.

'Other companies were very shy about going to Africa, very worried about investing there and the risks were exaggerated. It was a feasible business opportunity and as an African I was less afraid of it than non-Africans. That's why I decided to go and fill that gap. But I underestimated the hunger for communication and connectivity,' he says.

'Africa is a vast continent with very little fixed communication backbone and travel is very expensive and time consuming. Mobile phones met people's needs. I underestimated time and time again as I went from country to

country, the latent need for connectivity.'

Mo has happy memories of researching mobile communication with his supervisor David Parsons during his time at Birmingham and said his doctorate led to him working for Cellnet and launching MSI, the company he owned prior to Celtel. 'Birmingham gave me the essential pieces of know-how and it's very important to me,' he says.

One of Celtel's founding principles was that it would not pay bribes and its success proved it was possible to do business ethically in Africa. However, Mo does not accept that bribery is limited to Africa. 'Bribery is prevalent everywhere. I take issue when people say bribery is prevalent in Africa, bribery is prevalent in Europe. For every corrupt politician in Africa there are a few corrupt businesspeople in Europe,' he says.

This passion for integrity has extended to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, which does not accept outside donations and is solely funded by Mo. He does not sit on the judging panel for the leadership prize, which last year was won by the former president of Botswana Festus Mogae.

The prize money is \$5 million over 10 years and \$200,000 annually for life thereafter plus a further \$200,000 per year for good causes nominated by the winner. With millions of Africans living in poverty, Mo has been criticised for rewarding leadership rather than providing aid, and even bribing politicians to lead well, but he thinks this is very short-sighted.

'Our expenditure is a drop in the ocean. What we're doing is leveraging \$70 billion of African aid on governance. We're not just fighting corruption and encouraging transparency, we need good policies. This is the most effective contribution. Per pound and per dollar we're encouraging billions of dollars of aid in the right direction. A small stone placed behind the tyres of a lorry can

stop it rolling backwards,' he says.

As the prize rewards great leadership, the foundation produces an annual index ranking sub-Saharan African countries on the quality of their governance. Mo sees the index as a tool for society to hold governments to account, which will keep them honest and help to lift millions of African people from poverty. A total of 48 countries are ranked based on information from five different categories.

Last year Mauritius and the Seychelles were at the top of the list, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia were the most in need of improvement.

**'I take issue when people say bribery is prevalent in Africa, bribery is prevalent in Europe.'**

Although he was named as one of the 100 most influential people in the world by *TIME* magazine and his work has been praised by leading political figures from Tony Blair and Nelson Mandela to Kofi Annan, Mo is typically understated when he says: 'I would like to be remembered as a good African boy who's lucky and did not forget his people.'

#### Learn more

About the Mo Ibrahim Foundation at [www.moibrahimfoundation.org](http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org)

### Dr Mo Ibrahim at a glance

**Born:** May 3 1946, Sudan. Mo describes himself as Nubian (Nubia is the area between Egypt and Sudan)

**Family:** Wife Hania, a retired consultant radiologist who worked at the University Hospital while Mo studied at Birmingham, daughter Hadeel, the foundation's Executive Director, and son Hosh, an actor

**Education:** Mo moved to Britain in 1974 to study for a Masters in Electrical Engineering at Bradford before completing his PhD at Birmingham

**Enjoys:** Travel and reading



# News

## Alumni of the Year

Dan Jones (BA Media, Culture and Society, 2001)



Dan, who has been Head of New Media at Birmingham's Maverick Television since 2005, was named alumnus of the year in recognition of his award-winning work in the media industry.

He joined Maverick in 2002 and focused on new media and drama productions for Channel 4 before becoming a producer on the broadcaster's web project 4Talent, then executive producing more than 20 major sites for the BBC and Channel 4. At 25, Dan picked up BAFTA's interactive new talent award and this year collected a second BAFTA for Maverick's multi-platform work on the *Embarrassing Bodies* television series.

Dan is a guest lecturer on the MA History, Film and Television course run by the Department of American and Canadian Studies. Dr Helen Laville, who nominated him for the award, says: 'Dan is at the forefront of new media and has already built a reputation for being at the cutting edge of media and the creative industries.'

Paul Manning  
(BSc Geology, 1996)

Paul is a professional cyclist who won the gold medal in Team Pursuit Cycling at the Beijing Olympics.

With his team-mates Ed Clancy, Geraint Thomas and Bradley Wiggins, he reached the finals of the Team Pursuit competition in style, setting a new world record in their semi-final ride against Russia. In the final against the Danish team they then shaved a further two seconds off that time, overlapping their opponents in the process.

Now retired, Paul can add his Olympic gold to bronze at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, a silver medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics and the World Championship title in 2005, 2007 and 2008.

Nick Blinco, Head of Development and Alumni Relations, says: 'The University has watched



Paul's career with pride. We are delighted to recognise him with this award and hope that his successes will inspire future generations to achieve similar heights.'

## Honorary graduands



Dr Ronan Treacy



Dr Tessa King-Farlow



Dr George Davies



Dr Mohamed Ibrahim

Four alumni were among the 13 honorary graduands from the worlds of the arts, business, medicine and religion recognised by the University this summer. They joined the 4,500 students who graduated from Birmingham at 16 degree congregation ceremonies.

**Dr Ronan Treacy (MBChB Medicine, 1983), Doctor of Medicine**

Ronan is an orthopaedic surgeon whose pioneering of a hip procedure called Birmingham Hip Resurfacing, alongside Derek McMinn, has revolutionised the management of hip arthritis in young and active patients.

After qualifying as a doctor at Birmingham in 1983, he was appointed as specialist registrar to the Birmingham and West Midlands Orthopaedic Training Programme in 1989. He became focused on Joint Replacement Surgery and later won the Laming Evans Award from the Royal College of Surgeons. He was appointed to the consultant staff at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in 1994 and ran Orthopaedic Training for the West Midlands from 1995–2000.

**Dr Tessa King-Farlow (BA English, 1979), Doctor of Music**

Tessa moved to Birmingham in 1967 and her first job in the city was at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC). She studied English Language and Literature at the University of Birmingham as a mature student in the 1970s and was a magistrate at Birmingham's Central Court for 20 years. In 2001 she became High Sheriff of the West Midlands.

She has served on the boards of many of Birmingham's major arts institutions including the MAC, Birmingham Opera Company and the Ikon Gallery. She became the Chair of Birmingham Royal Ballet in 2005, retiring in March this year.

**Dr George Davies, (Dentistry, 1962) Doctor of the University**

George is the fashion visionary who founded Next, launched George at Asda and created the Per Una label for Marks & Spencer. See the profile on pages 28–29.

**Dr Mohamed Ibrahim (PhD Electronic and Electrical Engineering, 1981)**

A global expert in mobile communications, Mo founded Celtel International to build and operate mobile networks in Africa and established the Mo Ibrahim Foundation to promote African governance. See the profile on pages 34–35.

## Jolly good fellows

Supporters who have made a unique contribution to the University are recognised with foundation fellowships. Dr Peter Rock, Nick Emery and Chris Gait were three of this year's recipients....

**Dr Peter Rock (BDS Dentistry, 1964)**

Peter's association with the University goes back nearly 50 years. After qualifying as BDS in 1964 he went on to obtain his Fellowship from the Royal College of Surgeons in 1969 and a DDS in 1974. Peter has served as a JP for many years and this experience has been invaluable to the University in a number of capacities – through membership of Senate and in chairing Health and Safety, Appeal and Disciplinary committees. He has also been a Public Orator.

**Nick Emery (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1964; MSc Biological Engineering, 1965)**

Nick works in the School of Chemical Engineering, as lecturer, senior lecturer and latterly reader in Food and Bioproducts Engineering. In 1983, he set up the first laboratory in the UK dedicated to the process engineering of animal cells.

He has always been keen to support the strategic direction of the University; he was an elected member of Senate and also served on Council and is currently a member of Court. From 2005 to 2008 Nick was president of the Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association, during which time the

Guild celebrated its centenary. Since 2008 he has continued as vice-president, honorary secretary and treasurer.

**Chris Gait**

Chris has retired as Consultant Orthodontist for Kidderminster and Bromsgrove Hospitals and is now an Orthodontist with Oasis Dental Care. Over the past 25 years he has trained many Birmingham graduates in orthodontics and been impressed with their calibre. This led him, in 2004, to endow a prize for the best student undertaking an elective in orthodontics. The prize is worth £1,000 each year, which he hopes will encourage the recipient to follow a career in the speciality.

In 2006 he helped the University to secure significant funds from the Kidderminster Medical Society, of which he is a member. The money was used to furnish and name a seminar room in the Medical School and to set up the Kidderminster Medical Society Bursary, which has provided valuable support to students on our graduate entry medical programme.

Chris is also a registered Blue Badge Tourist Guide who leads groups around the city of Birmingham, Worcester and the Cotswolds.

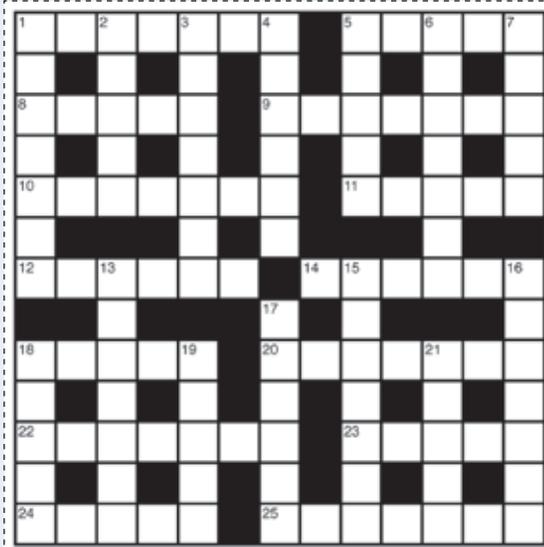


University supporters: The 2009 Foundation Fellows

# Puzzles – Benefits – Giving

## Competitions

Test your brain with our challenging crossword and strenuous Sudoku for a chance to win some University merchandise.



## Two-in-One Crossword

Both sets of clues lead to the same solution

### QUICK CLUES

#### Across

- 1,5 Give up (4,3,5)  
 8 Other people's (5)  
 9 Italian flavouring (7)  
 10 Hold covers (7)  
 11 Fable writer (5)  
 12 Most recent (6)  
 14 Cutting (6)  
 18 Ebb and flow (5)  
 20 Book segment (7)  
 22 UK (7)  
 23 Boredom (5)  
 24 Mountain (5)  
 25 Serving bench (7)

#### Down

- 1,18 Cook's workplace (7,5)  
 2 Take advantage (5)  
 3 Lights (7)  
 4 Self-centred person (6)  
 5 Prairie beast (5)  
 6 Bigoted (7)  
 7,16 Military transport (5,7)  
 13 Ceremony (7)  
 15 French manor (7)  
 16 See 7 down  
 17 Panoramic (6)  
 18 See 1 down  
 19 Step (5)  
 21 Belief (5)

### CRYPTIC CLUES

#### Across

- 1,5 Strike out ecclesiastical clothing, and stop the craving (4,3,5)  
 8 The revenue belongs to others (5)  
 9 Love orange juice with herb (7)  
 10 Chick emerges from ID serveries (7)  
 11 'The Sundaes Soprano Ate' by fabled author (5)  
 12 The latest joint venture to come out of Yorkshire and Cornwall? (6)  
 14 A detective in charge of something sharp (6)  
 18 Periodic changes to the first and fifteenth (approximately) (5)  
 20 It breaks the story to church meeting (7)  
 22 Great place for it to enter the brain (7)  
 23 Nine, fashionable, but greatly lacking in interest (5)  
 24 Swiss peak that is on reverse of note with Queen (5)  
 25 Make an opposing move with playing piece (7)

#### Down

- 1,18 Major has itch to establish motion for family centre (7,5)  
 2 Deny a degree of heat (5)  
 3 Sets fire to hill and part of Cheshire (7)  
 4 One with love for one, for example. Love is true (6)  
 5 Beast that has laugh over desire (5)  
 6 Pre-formed notion to be cut diagonally (7)  
 7,16 Academic publisher with vehicle, right? One determined to overcome armoured car? (5,7)  
 13 Union we would ring for (7)  
 15 Talk on water – that's foreign for mansion (7)  
 16 See 7 down  
 17 Beautiful appearance back in 'Epic in Ecstasy' (6)  
 18 See 1 down  
 19 See the way air rises? (5)  
 21 Principle 'X' is alien (5)

### How to enter

Cut out and return your completed entry (photocopies will be accepted) by 31 January 2010 to Alumni Office, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, England, B15 2TT

Please mark your envelope Magazine Competition and include your name, address, contact telephone number, subject and year of graduation. Terms and conditions apply.

## Benefits and discounts – University benefits

### Events

Find out about events and reunions on our full and varied calendar, from pub nights to lectures and networking events. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/events](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/events) for all the latest events.

### News

Keep up to date with the latest University and alumni news with our website and publications including our monthly e-newsletter *Bite-size*. Sign up now at [www.your.bham.ac.uk](http://www.your.bham.ac.uk)

### Sport

Alumni are entitled to discounted annual membership at the Munrow Sports Centre. Call +44 (0)121 414 4767 or visit [www.sport.bham.ac.uk](http://www.sport.bham.ac.uk)

### University library

Alumni are eligible for free reference membership of the library for the first 12 months after graduation. Once the free membership is complete, alumni are eligible for the concessionary rate of £25. Call +44 (0)121 414 5828 or visit [www.library.bham.ac.uk](http://www.library.bham.ac.uk)

### The Guild of Students

You don't have to leave your student life behind – by becoming a Guild of Students Life Member you can continue to have access to Guild facilities, societies and welfare. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits/](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits/) for more information.

### University Gifts and Souvenirs

Buy University of Birmingham merchandise from Zest in the Guild, the Munrow Centre's

Sport Shop or the University Centre's Kukri shop. Merchandise is also available via [www.gifts.bham.ac.uk](http://www.gifts.bham.ac.uk). For more information, call +44 (0)121 414 3362.

### Accommodation

Alumni receive a 20% discount when staying in halls accommodation and other discounts are available for hotel-style accommodation at the Conference Park. Call +44 (0)121 415 8400 or visit [www.conference.bham.ac.uk](http://www.conference.bham.ac.uk)

### Weddings

For that perfect day, the University offers an extensive range of wedding venues and exclusive locations. Call +44 (0)121 415 8400, visit [www.weddings.bham.ac.uk](http://www.weddings.bham.ac.uk) or email [e.m.carlin@bham.ac.uk](mailto:e.m.carlin@bham.ac.uk) for further information.

## National and international discounts

### Avis Car Rental

Rent an Avis car and enjoy the freedom to explore more for less, wherever you are, wherever you want to go. Visit [www.avis.co.uk/premierpartners](http://www.avis.co.uk/premierpartners) or call +44 (0)844 581 0187 quoting your unique code AWD K072101 for exclusive alumni discounts.

### National Car Rental

Take advantage of exclusive discounts on car and van hire rates available to alumni. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits) for more information.

### City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)

Get a 10% discount on tickets for CBSO-promoted concerts at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham ([www.cbso.co.uk](http://www.cbso.co.uk)). Quote 'CBGT Offer' when booking with the Ticket Office on +44 (0)121 780 3333. This offer is subject to availability, cannot be combined with any other offers or discounts (except the disabled patron discount), and does not apply to tickets purchased on a previous occasion. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits) for more information.

### City Inn

Special weekend offers are available exclusively for University of Birmingham alumni at the City Inn Contemporary Hotels in Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds and Westminster. Simply quote 'University of Birmingham Alumni Rate' when booking one of these award-winning hotels. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits) for more information.

### InterContinental Hotels Group

Enjoy discounts of up to 35% on weekend stays with IHG available at participating Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, and Express by Holiday Inn hotels across the UK and Europe. The offers are available over Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights until 26 December 2009, so why not go ahead and treat yourself to that weekend break away. Visit [www.ihg.com/alumni](http://www.ihg.com/alumni) or call 0871 423 4874 from the UK or 1-800 55 31 55 from the Republic of Ireland quoting 'Exclusive.'

### Radisson SAS, Birmingham city centre

Alumni can receive special weekend discounts at the stunning 39-storey glass Radisson SAS Hotel. To book your stay, please contact the hotel reservations team directly on +44 (0)121 654 6100 quoting 31889. Visit [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/benefits) for more information.

*Terms and conditions apply. All benefit and discount information may be subject to change.*

# Donation form

Full name and address .....

.....

.....

Postcode ..... Year of Graduation .....

Tel no ..... Email .....

### Making the most of your gift (UK taxpayers only)

By making a Gift Aid declaration, your gift will be worth an extra 25% to the University at no additional cost to you. To make your gift tax effective in this way please sign this declaration.\*

**I agree that the University of Birmingham can treat all donations I have made in the past six years and all future donations I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations.**

\* To make a tax effective gift, you must have paid an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax that equals or exceeds the amount of tax to be reclaimed. Gift Aid is calculated as follows: 25% from the tax reclaimed and 3% from the transitional relief provided by government following the fall in basic tax rate from 22% to 20% in April 2008. Find out more at [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/gift)

Signature ..... Date .....

### I wish to make a gift to:

- Influence health and lifestyle  
 Influence society  
 Influence heritage and culture  
 Influence the leaders of tomorrow  
 Influence innovation\*  
 If you would like to specify a particular project please do so here: .....

\* To be distributed annually to invest in creative and innovative ideas that will have an immediate impact on the student experience at Birmingham

### Cheque/CAF voucher

I enclose a cheque made payable to the University of Birmingham or a CAF Voucher for

£25  £50  £100  £250  Other £ .....

### Credit/Debit Card

Please debit £ ..... from my Visa / MasterCard / Maestro / AMEX (delete as applicable)

Card number

CCV number\*  \* The last 3 or 4 digits found on the signature strip on the back of your card.

Name on card: .....

Start date  /

Expiry date  /

Issue number (Maestro only)

Signature ..... Date .....

- Please send me information on making a regular gift to the University of Birmingham  
 Please send me information on making a bequest to the University of Birmingham in my will  
 I would like to discuss making a gift with a member of the University's Development team  
 I do not wish my name to appear on the list of supporters of the University of Birmingham

Please return this form to: Development and Alumni Office, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, England (and not to your bank). Please note a completed photocopy of this form is acceptable.

**Thank you.**

All data is kept in accordance with our data protection statement. A copy is available on [www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/stay/data.shtml](http://www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/stay/data.shtml) or by ringing (0)121 414 2771

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