

Famous alumni

TV stars, hollywood actors or sports stars the University of Birmingham has numerous alumni who have rose to fame in their chosen disciplines. Below is a selection of famous faces:

Chris Addison (BA English, 1994)

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Chris is one of Britain's best loved comedians.

He has since been involved with the world famous Edinburgh Fringe Festival 11 times, performing stand-up comedy and in 2004 he was nominated for the prestigious Perrier Award for comedy for his show, "Civilisation".

He is best known for his current role as a regular panellist on Mock The Week. He is also known for his lecture-style comedy shows, two of which he later adapted for Radio 4. In addition to stand-up, in television he plays Ollie in the BBC Two television satire *The Thick of It* and Toby in its spin-off film *In the Loop*, and he co-created and starred in the BBC Two sitcom *Lab Rats*. On radio, he previously hosted the weekly comedy news satire show *7 Day Sunday* on BBC Radio 5 Live from 2009 to 2010.

Arthur Bywater GC GM (BSc Chemistry, 1935; MSc Chemistry, 1936)

Arthur was one of only eight people, and the only civilian, to be awarded both the George Cross and George Medal for his bravery and courage.

On 22 February 1944 there was an accident at an arms factory in Kirby. 19 workers were filling fuses when one exploded, killing one woman immediately and wounding two others. The fuse had exploded because of a defective striker and Arthur realised that the whole building, which contained 12,000 highly explosive fuses, was in danger of igniting. He led three other volunteers in the dangerous work of clearing the wrecked factory of 12,724 fuses over the next three days, plus another 4,000 which were believed to be defective.

Arthur was awarded the George Cross by King George VI at Buckingham Palace on October 24 1944.

A few months after his exploits for which he was awarded the GC, Arthur was involved in another explosion in the same factory. This occurred during the filling of ammunition, the initial blast was followed by others which put out all the lights. The only illumination at the site was provided by the numerous fires.

Once the fires had been extinguished and the salvage work was finished a team was needed to clear the wrecked building. Arthur and three colleagues volunteered. The ammunition which had caused the accident consisted of anti-personnel, anti-disturbance and time-delay bombs which were scattered through and beneath the debris and were in danger of detonating without warning.

The movement of wreckage posed a constant hazard because ignorance or a moment of carelessness by any member of the team could endanger the lives of the others, but the clearance operations were completed without casualties.

He was awarded the George Medal from King George VI at Buckingham Palace on November 6 1945.

Arthur passed away 6th April 6th April 2005.

Ellie Crisell (BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1998)



Ellie is a journalist and TV presenter, best known for her role as presenter for newsround on the BBC. She currently presents the BBC one 8pm news summary.

To read more about Ellie please click [here \(alumni/ouralumni/alumnispotlight/Alumni-profiles/EllieCrisell.aspx\)](#).

Hannah England (BSc Biochemistry, 2009)



Hannah is a professional 1500 metre runner, who in 2011 was crowned silver medalist at the IAAF World Championships in Daegu. She also competed for Team GB at the London 2012 Olympics.

Matthew Goode (BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1998)



Matthew graduated from Birmingham in 1998 with a degree in Drama and Theatre Arts.

Matthew is an actor. He has starred in several films including *Leap Year* and *Watchmen*. More recently he has starred in the gothic horror



Tamsin Greig (BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1988)



Tamsin is an actress best known for her roles in Comedies *Green Wing* and *Friday Night Dinner*. Her performance in *Green Wing* as Dr Caroline Todd won her 2005 'Best Comedy Performance' at the Royal Television Society awards.

As well as her work in TV Greig also has a longstanding role in Radio 4 soap opera *The Archers* and has achieved much success on stage. She was the recipient of a Laurence Olivier Award in 2007 for her role in *Much Ado About Nothing* and nominated again in 2011 for *The Little Dog Laughed*.

Pam Relph MBE (BSc Physics, 2011)



After being medically discharged from the Army, Pamela took up rowing on the advice of her Sister and never looked back. In 2011 she, along with her team won the gold medal at the Rowing World Championships in Slovenia in the mixed coxed four.

At the London 2012 Paralympics the team repeated this feat becoming Paralympic Champions.

She was awarded an MBE in the 2013 New Years Honours list for her services to rowing.

Ben Shephard (BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1997)

Ben is one of the most recognisable presenters on British TV.

He is currently employed by **Sky Sports** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sky_Sports). His most recognised role was as a main presenter on the now defunct breakfast station **GMTV** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GMTV>) and has on occasion been a stand in presenter on *This Morning*. He has hosted game shows such as ***The Krypton Factor*** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Krypton_Factor), ***1 vs. 100*** ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_vs._100_\(UK_game_show\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_vs._100_(UK_game_show))), ***Safebreakers*** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safebreakers>) and ***Tipping Point*** ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipping_Point_\(game_show\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipping_Point_(game_show))).

He is currently the lead presenter of Goals on Sunday on Sky Sports 1 as well as lead presenter on Channel 4's cookery programme What's Cooking?

Non Stanford (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2010)



Initially an international country runner, Non switched from athletics to triathlon in 2008 after a succession of injuries and has never looked back.

In 2012 she won the ITU Triathlon U23 World Championships, the next year going on to win the World senior title, the first woman to step up and achieve this feat.

Chris Tarrant (BA English, 1967)



Chris has been national television and radio star for 40 years – and still going strong.

In 1974 he became a national star presenting – not to mention writing and producing – the brilliantly anarchic Saturday morning children's show *Tiswas*, which also made a name for Lenny Henry.

Best known as the sharp-witted quizmaster on the long-running TV quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* – and for creating the catchphrases "but we don't want to give you that" and "is that your final answer?" – Chris has been a celebrity for 40 years.

Ann Widdecome (BA Latin, 1969)



Ann is a former Conservative MP as well as a TV presenter.

She has held several parliamentary positions including Minister of State for the Department of Employment, Minister of State for the Home Office, and Shadow Health Secretary. She has enjoyed a successful writing career penning a number of books one of which, *The Clematis Tree*, rose to number eight in the Times Best Seller List.

In 2010 Ann was one of the celebrity contestants who appeared on the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing*.

