



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

OLD JOE

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS MAGAZINE

Autumn 2021

Warming
up for the
Commonwealth
Games

The graduate
saving others
from her brother's
heart condition

New city centre
hub open to all

The quiet green
revolution

The ghosts
of campus

Farewell to the Vice-Chancellor

Professor Sir David Eastwood DL, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University, shares his reflections on 12 years of bringing Birmingham to the world.

As many of you will know, this year is to be my final year as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham before I hand over to Professor Adam Tickell. Over the last 12 years, leading this great University has been the highlight of my career. During this time, we have been met with challenges and recently perhaps the greatest challenge in living memory, but through them all we have still achieved and shown the nation and the world why universities like ours are so vital.

As I prepare to close my chapter in the University's history, it seems apt to reflect on the achievements of the last twelve years. The University of Birmingham has always been a great university, from our founding civic mission to create a university open to all, regardless of class, race or gender, we have sought to put our exceptional students and research at the heart of our endeavours. In the last twelve years, we have succeeded in our efforts to transform the University on both accounts, realise its potential, and make the University of Birmingham known across the world.

There are many things that make me deeply proud of the University of Birmingham and I would like to share with you some of my highlights.

Our academic quality and reputation has been transformed. Achieving the University's ambitions depends on people, and this is the single biggest investment that the University has made in recent years. We have significantly expanded our academic staff numbers, including world-class researchers and teachers, leading early-career academics, and Interdisciplinary Professorial Fellows.

Birmingham is now seen as a truly exciting place to be, and we have developed an enviable reputation for attracting some of the finest minds in the world to teach and research here.

We have a campus unrivalled in the UK. Alongside our investments in people, during the last 12 years we have transformed our campus through investing in our facilities which benefit our students, staff, and local community. We have opened a new library, a world-class Sport & Fitness centre and the Green Heart parkland in the centre of our campus. Facilities such as our new Collaborative Teaching Laboratory and School of Engineering provide opportunities for cutting-edge research and teaching to take place jointly, and catalyse collaboration between academia and industry. If you have not returned to Birmingham recently, do come – I am sure you will be delighted with the ways in which we have developed and improved the campus.

We have opened up the University of Birmingham to more students than ever. Since 2008 we have grown our student community by over 20%, growing our alumni community across nearly every country in the world and opening up more places to students from diverse backgrounds. I am proud to have met so many students whose lives have been changed through programmes like our Pathways to Birmingham, where we engage with over 200 schools and colleges in the West Midlands to broaden access to our University and others in the Russell Group. About one in five of our 35,000 students now comes from a widening participation background and applicants to these programmes keep growing; in 2020 we had the largest number of applicants ever.



We are contributing to education across Birmingham in new and substantial ways. I am especially proud that in 2015 we became the only university in the country to open our own secondary school and sixth form. The University of Birmingham School gives young people of all backgrounds and abilities from across the city unrivalled access to the University's world-class resources, research, and people, and has gone from strength to strength.

In 2021 we took another important step by bringing into the University group the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure. Drawing on the internationally-recognised rail expertise at the University, the College will create new pathways in further and higher education, training experts for our region and nation.

We have reinvigorated our partnerships with our local community, government and industry. Our role as England's first civic university, anchored in our city, is at the heart of the University, and we have strengthened our commitment to the region even further in recent years through a wide range of social, creative, economic, and scientific contributions. Our new city centre hub, The Exchange, symbolises this focus, providing a physical presence at the heart of the city for our research, and facilitating student entrepreneurship. Through Birmingham Health Partners, we collaborate with our local NHS partners to create innovations in healthcare and take them through to clinical application. Next year, we are looking forward to playing our part as a key partner in the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, hosting events on campus as well as accommodating competitors in our Athletes Village.

We are finding new expressions of our civic mission globally. The University's global outlook is exemplified in our new campus in Dubai. The campus allows us to bring Birmingham's world-leading research-intensive education to the UAE. Our first graduates are already using their education to identify pneumonia from x-rays, keep us safe online, assist children with learning difficulties, and much more. In China, our dual degrees with Jinan University are enabling students to study applied mathematics in Guangzhou and receive a dual degree from both universities. In the US, our BRIDGE research partnership with the University of Illinois has brought together thinking across borders, including research to unlock the secrets of the body and brain, from maternal health to traumatic brain injury.

These transformations were hard won, and the achievements of the whole University community. They mean that Birmingham is now a University of real ambition, innovation, and commitment to quality, recognised nationally and internationally.



Our wonderful alumni community have played an important role in this, and I am hugely grateful for the support that so many of you have shown for **Birmingham In Action**, our fundraising and volunteering campaign. As a charity and as a civic university, we have a key opportunity to use our knowledge to improve our world, addressing the global problems that affect us locally. Alumni and friends like you are giving bright minds from the most vulnerable backgrounds the means to study at Birmingham, complete their degree, and fulfil their potential against all the odds. You are also accelerating our ground-breaking research to tackle the great challenges of our time: cancer, youth mental health, the environment, migration, and COVID-19. Together we are developing life-changing, life-saving solutions for those who need them most, all around the world.

Let me urge you to join me in continuing to support the University of Birmingham as we enter into our next chapter – it is an extraordinary institution, and one which can look forward to an extraordinary future.

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See videos and bonus articles at www.oldjoe.co.uk

The cover

High jumper Laura Zialor (Third year, BSc Sports, Physical Education and Coaching Science) only switched from the triple jump in 2019, but has already reached the qualification standard for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Read about her hopes for the Games, along with other students and alumni, on page 24.

Photo: Kris Askey



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These are unpredictable times...

The articles in *Old Joe* are accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time we go to print. However, things continue to change. To see whether there have been any updates, visit www.oldjoe.co.uk

If you have difficulties reading any part of this magazine, please visit our website or request a plain text version.

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CALL FOR END OF POSTCODE LOTTERY IN MISCARRIAGE CARE AND TREATMENT

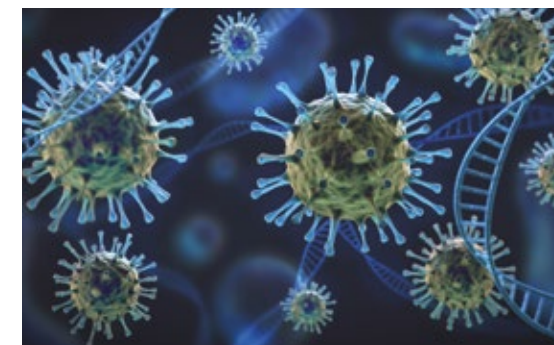
Leading experts at Birmingham and Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research have, in a series of articles published in *The Lancet*, called on the UK government to invest in early pregnancy units and recurrent miscarriage clinics to end the postcode lottery in current care and treatment.

An estimated 23 million miscarriages occur every year worldwide – equating to 44 pregnancy losses each minute. The consequences of miscarriage are both physical, such as bleeding or infection, and psychological.

Miscarriage almost quadruples the risk of suicide, doubles the risk of depression, and similarly raises the risk of anxiety. Previous studies showed that one in five mothers and one in 12 partners experience long-term symptoms of post-traumatic stress after loss.

Arri Coomarasamy, Professor of Gynaecology & Reproductive Medicine at the University and Director of Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research, says: 'Despite the many advances in miscarriage research and care, we have many more avenues to investigate – for example, we need to understand why there is a higher rate of miscarriage in black women and why miscarriage is associated with an increased future risk of premature birth.'

Find out more about the University's research at www.birmingham.ac.uk/heroes/miscarriage and look out for an upcoming webinar with Arri.



WORLD'S LEADING COVID-19 SEQUENCING

A system developed at the University proved the most sophisticated genome sequencing programme for COVID-19 in the world.

The CLIMB-COVID system, utilising new bioinformatics software and cloud computing, was designed and built by researchers in under a month and processed the sequencing data of more than 675,000 coronavirus genomes.

All data from the project was integrated and shared in real-time, enabling the early detection and evaluation of variants of the virus.

Major funding for youth mental health research

The University's Institute for Mental Health has received a £1.5 million grant from the Wolfson Foundation to fund a research centre focused on supporting youth mental health.

Professor Matthew Broome, Director of the Institute for Mental Health, says: 'We are extremely grateful to the Wolfson Foundation for supporting our work through this new centre at the University.'

'It will create a new space for researchers, postgraduate students, NHS colleagues and our youth advisory group to come together more effectively. We hope this will provide the scientific environment and conditions that the Institute needs to accelerate our work to support and treat young people with mental ill health.'

BRINGING BIRMINGHAM AND HONG KONG CLOSER TOGETHER

The bond between the University, alumni and supporters based in Hong Kong is being strengthened by the launch of the University of Birmingham Hong Kong Foundation.

The University's connection with Hong Kong goes back decades. With more than 3,000 alumni residents, the territory is one of the largest concentrations of graduates anywhere outside of the UK. Many are members of the Birmingham University Alumni Association Hong Kong (BUAAHK), one of the oldest and largest Birmingham alumni groups outside of the UK.

The Foundation, which launches online this November, will harness the power of philanthropy to accelerate our progress in addressing issues that matter to Hong Kong and the wider region.



Conrad Wong (MSc [Eng] Foundation Engineering, 1988), Chair of the Foundation, says: 'With the launch of the Foundation, we as alumni have an opportunity to help our alma mater break new ground.'

'We have a unique opportunity to help shape the next chapter in the University's illustrious history by lending our support, so that it can enrich the student experience and research that matters to Hong Kong.'

Find out more at www.birmingham.ac.uk/hk-foundation

THANK YOU for your support

A big thank you to all our alumni and supporters who made a donation towards improving diagnosis and treatment of cancer at the University.

Almost 1,000 donors have contributed more than £120,000 towards research from Birmingham experts into childhood, brain and bowel cancers.

If you would like to make a donation, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/action/oncancer



Read all about it

University researchers are studying the language young people use in stories thanks to a partnership with the National Literacy Trust.

As part of Birmingham Stories, a campaign to spread awareness of the importance of storytelling and literacy at every stage of life, entries to a story writing competition for nine to 14-year-olds will become part of the Birmingham Stories Corpus (BSC).

The three winning efforts on the topic of Water Stories will be published on the University website.

Find out more at <https://literacytrust.org.uk/communities/birmingham/>

GOLDEN GLORY

It was a glorious summer for Team GB Para Cycling athlete and alumna Lora Fachie (BSc Physiotherapy, 2010). She came home from the Tokyo Paralympics with two gold medals (alongside guide Corrine Hall) and a further silver, while Laura Sugar (PGDipEd Physical Education, 2014) also topped the podium with gold in the Para Canoe 200m.

In the Olympics, we saw three graduates earn bronze medals as part of the British Women's Hockey Team. For full details on all the University participants at both Games, go to www.oldjoe.co.uk



Five or more symptoms can lead to long COVID

Birmingham is making breakthroughs towards understanding long COVID, which is believed to have affected 2 million people so far in the UK, with symptoms lasting at least three months.

Having more than five symptoms of COVID-19 in the first week of infection is significantly associated with the development of long COVID, irrespective of age or gender, according to a new University of Birmingham-led review.

The Therapies for Long COVID (TLC) Study Group highlights the ten most common symptoms of long COVID. These are **fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle pain, cough, headache, joint pain, chest pain, altered smell, diarrhoea and altered taste.**

The researchers identified two main symptom clusters of long COVID: those comprised exclusively of fatigue, headache and upper respiratory complaints; and those with multi-system complaints including ongoing fever and gastroenterological symptoms.

Lead author Dr Olalekan Lee Aiyegbusi, Deputy Director at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Patient Reported Outcomes Research (CPROR), says: 'There is evidence that the impact of acute COVID-19 on patients, regardless of severity, extends beyond hospitalisation in the most severe cases, to ongoing impaired quality of life, mental health and employment issues.'

'People living with long COVID generally feel abandoned and dismissed by healthcare providers and receive limited or conflicting advice. More than one-third of the patients in one of the studies included in the review reported they still felt ill or in a worse clinical condition at eight weeks than at the onset of COVID-19.'

Dr Shamil Haroon, Clinical Lecturer in Primary Care and co-Principal Investigator of the University of Birmingham TLC Study, says: 'Neither the biological or immunological mechanisms of long COVID, nor the rationale for why certain people are more susceptible to these effects, are yet clear, limiting development of therapies. It is essential we act quickly to address these issues.'

Three areas of COVID-19 research funded by alumni

- 1 Many alumni, including Adam Jones (BComm, 1990), have funded a new PhD student to support Professor Alex Richter's work on COVID-19 antibodies and long COVID.
- 2 A new dentistry PhD studentship is being funded by a dentistry graduate to explore the implications of COVID-19 on the profession.
- 3 Post-doctoral research fellow Dr Francesca Peruzzo is being funded by Kathleen Chew (LLB, 1981; DUniv, 2019) to investigate how technology is being used to ensure everyone has access to learn remotely during the pandemic, exploring learning processes, and the experiences of learners, parents and teachers across the UK, Italy, the USA, Australia, Malaysia and Chile.

Thank you so much for your support!

BIRMINGHAM ACTION

Find out how you can support research into COVID-19 at the University at www.birmingham.ac.uk/action/oncovid-19

Discover more through The Exchange

The University's new city centre hub is opening up an exchange of knowledge and ideas across Birmingham – both in person and online.

A place to reshape our future together

A stone's throw from where the University first began in 1875 (as Mason Science College), The Exchange brings the University of Birmingham back to the heart of the city.

The Exchange will enable members of the public to work together with community organisations, businesses and policy makers to shape our cities and regions, making them better places to live, work and learn.

Four rooms are named after alumni and friends who have done just that:

- Mary Sturge, one of the first female scholars at Mason College who championed preventative medicines and women's right to vote
- Dr Winifred Hackett (BSc Electrical Engineering, 1929), the first female Engineering graduate

- Dr Graham Turner (BSc Botany, 1958) who left a gift in his will to benefit students and the city – see page 10
- Dr Benjamin Zephaniah (DLitt, 2008) award-winning Birmingham poet and honorary graduate

The Exchange is housed in the Grade II listed former Municipal Bank, unused for two decades. **Scan the QR code to watch the redevelopment of the building.** https://youtu.be/PJ_XeDA-QWM.



How you can use The Exchange

You can delve into our research through lectures and talks, participate in hands-on workshops and join interactive walks and tours. You can also drop in during opening hours to see our brand new exhibition and enjoy refreshments at The Exchange café/bar.

Special offer for alumni: Want to work somewhere inspirational after working from home? The Exchange offers a range of meeting/collaboration spaces. As part of the University community, alumni get a special discount rate.

Courses for everyone: As well as exhibitions highlighting the University's research, you can learn new skills such as coding through free taster courses, short paid courses and micro-credentials.

Support for entrepreneurs: The Exchange offers support for leaders in the private, public and third sectors, plus a hub to support entrepreneurial skills.

Take part online: A range of virtual courses, exhibitions and events are available, and are being expanded all the time.

The air we breathe: the first exhibition and public programme

We all need clean air and green spaces to live and live well. Our new public programme of exhibitions, activities and events will offer a rare opportunity to engage with University research exploring the relationships between people, air quality and the environment.

The exhibition

The opening exhibition showcases three University of Birmingham research projects: the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR), HydroFLEX and WM-Air:

- 1 How will our forests cope as the amount of carbon dioxide in our air changes? BIFoR is flooding circles of trees with air containing more CO₂ to see how they respond.
- 2 A miniature version of Birmingham's HydroFLEX train demonstrates how hydrogen can replace diesel on the railway. The first of its kind in the UK, its hydrogen fuel cells are potentially carbon neutral.
- 3 West Midlands Air examines the impact on public health and the economy, from our access to green spaces to how businesses can help improve our air.



Photo: Greg Milner Photography

The public programme

Expanding on the exhibition, more than 40 pieces of research will be brought to life through lectures from leading academics, interactive activities for families and much more. The research is drawn from every College, so whatever you studied, you will find something related to your subject. An online programme means you can enjoy the public programme from anywhere in the world.

BIRMINGHAM ACTION

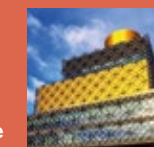
Get involved – in person or online:

- Visit in person at Centenary Square – opposite the Library of Birmingham
- Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/exchange to see the latest exhibitions, courses you can book and online activities
- Apply for support with a start-up business idea – see page 10
- Donate to a start-up scholarship to help talented young entrepreneurs harness their creativity and ambition and follow their dreams – see page 10
- Talk to us about supporting the environment research in the exhibition or another area you are passionate about – email giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk

At the heart of a changing city

Thinking of visiting The Exchange? Find out what else has changed since you studied here.

Centenary Square also hosts the iconic Library of Birmingham. The largest public library in the UK, this flagship building is the most popular visitor attraction outside of London.



Birmingham's busiest station, Birmingham New Street, has undergone a massive transformation with the new Grand Central shopping area, remodelled entrances and a distinctive new look.



The West Midlands Metro opened in 1999 and originally ran between Birmingham Snow Hill and Wolverhampton. A huge extension now runs right through the city centre to the Library of Birmingham, and is planned to go as far as Edgbaston and Birmingham Airport.



Completed in 2003, the distinctive Selfridges building divided opinion on completion, but now the curved façade and 15,000 anodised aluminium discs are a firm Brummie favourite.



Exchanging great ideas for entrepreneurs

Are you a recent graduate with a great business idea? Or an experienced entrepreneur, with expertise to share? Get involved at The Exchange.

Student and graduate entrepreneurs from the University of Birmingham now have a new and exciting base to develop their ideas. UoB Elevate is an incubator and business growth programme designed to support entrepreneurs to the next level of their growth.

Based in the new Graham Turner Entrepreneurship Centre at The Exchange in Birmingham city centre, the first cohort of five participants joined in September 2021, including an all-natural pet products business and a tool for artists to sell their work directly to customers, digitally and offline. Participants pitched their idea to an independent panel to be accepted.

UoB Elevate is helping more than 30 teams or individuals with high-potential early stage ideas and existing business or social enterprises looking to grow to the next level or prove their concept.

A package of support for new entrepreneurs

Businesses with at least 50% University of Birmingham student/graduate ownership are preferred, and those who take part will benefit from:

- Being part of a cohort of growth businesses, learning from each other
- Running their business from the city centre incubator within the iconic Exchange building
- Access to the alumni mentoring scheme
- Dedicated support and guidance to help grow
- Access to regional business support schemes, funding schemes and investor networks
- Being able to hire student interns and consultancy schemes
- Receiving special offers and discounts from business service providers

Get up and running with a Start-Up Scholarship

In addition, final year students and graduates up to five years after graduation could apply for a £15,000 University of Birmingham Start-Up Scholarship.

Exclusive to participants who are enrolled on the UoB Elevate programme, the one-year scholarship is intended to support the business in getting started and scaling up.

The scholarship has been made possible thanks to generous gifts from donors like Michael Rawlinson (BSc Economics, 1991).

Michael says:

'I've decided to fund a scholarship because when I left University, I had a business plan but I didn't have funding or people I could ask about things. I ended up giving up and doing a Masters instead.'

'I had a wonderful career in the city and ended up setting up my own business. But I always wonder what would have happened if I had that support back then. So this is my opportunity to give other people that chance.'

To find out more, email the B-Enterprising team at benterprising@contacts.bham.ac.uk



Michael and Bozana Rawlinson

The Graham Turner Entrepreneurship Centre was founded thanks to a generous gift in his will from alumnus Graham Turner (BSc Plant Biology, 1958) who believed wholeheartedly in supporting the future generations of students at Birmingham. If you share that passion and would like to explore what leaving a gift in your will could do for students and life-changing research, please contact Legacy and Endowment Manager Tom Kay at giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk

ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY VIRTUALLY



How do you get work experience when you can't go into the workplace? Virtual internships have been around at the University long before the COVID-19 pandemic prompted working from home, providing students with the opportunity to gain experience wherever they are across the globe.

The University's Careers Network service offers a variety of remote internship opportunities to current students and recent graduates, helping them develop professional remote working skills. Travel costs aren't a barrier and learners aren't limited to the organisations they can physically get to.

What's in it for employers?

- Cost: cheaper than an in-person internship – no need for office space
- Access to skilled students around the world, getting a unique perspective
- Developing international links and networks
- Transferrable: opportunities can be local, national and global
- Flexibility: full or part-time opportunities can be structured to suit the project
- Identify talented potential employees

Alex McIver, (BA Hispanic Studies and Geography, 2005; MSc Enterprise, Environment and Place, 2007) Head of Business Development at Greenfee365, has hosted two virtual interns. He says: *'Both students were extremely motivated and made a real contribution during their time with us. We happily offered a part-time role to one of them and we really recommend the virtual internship scheme – we would definitely host roles again in the future.'*



Karolina Jagodzinska (BA Modern Languages, 2019) was one of those students. She sought out an internship while a student to help her stand out in a competitive jobs market. She says: *'I had a chance to observe how a start-up changes into a fully functioning company with team members in Italy, France, Spain and the UK. Completing a virtual internship has equipped me with skills that are important in the international market – communication, time management and organisation. I have also learned a lot about myself, my working style and preferences.'*



What's in it for students and recent graduates?

- Improved skills and graduate employability
- Increased confidence and resilience
- Access to international networks
- Support to define their career paths
- Accessibility and flexibility – an experience they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to undertake (due to finance, mobility or logistics)



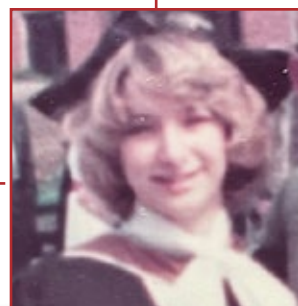
Campus r♥mances

ALUMNI TELL THEIR STORIES OF LOVE ON CAMPUS

A FAMILY OF LOVE STORIES

Anne Hignell (BSocSci, 1982) and David Hignell (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1982)

Anne says: 'I met my husband David at Mason Hall during our first year. We became a couple at a party on the fifth floor on 21 June 1980. We married in 1983 but kept the 21 June (Fifth Floor Party Day) special. We looked for a sunset every year on that date until he died in 2011. I still look for that sunset on that date wherever I may be in the world.'



Anne Hignell (mother)



David Hignell (father)



Emily Hignell (daughter) and her husband Marco Delgado Sanchez

Emily Hignell (BSc Chemistry, 2012) and Marco Delgado Sanchez (MSc Engineering, 2013)

Anne says: 'My daughter Emily also met her husband at the University of Birmingham during their first year in 2009 when they lived in Tennis Court Flats. They went on to marry and now have a little boy (our grandson)! A lovely continuation of a story that had a lovely start all those years ago.'



Charlotte Anne Bailey (BA Human Geography, 2015; MSc Urban and Regional Planning, 2016) and Oliver McGurk (BMedSci Biomedical Sciences, 2015)

Charlotte says: 'I met my now fiancé at the University of Birmingham in 2013. It was the end of my first year. We've been together for eight years and we just recently got engaged! We have fond memories of the University.'



Jaimi Shrive (BA Political Science and International Relations, 2020) and Jessica Taylor (PhD Psychology, 2019)

Jaimi (on the right above) says: 'Jessica and I met through feminist and political campaigns. We both lived in the same area and happened to be studying at the University of Birmingham at the same time. The most memorable part that the University campus played in our relationship was when she graduated with her PhD. I was unbelievably proud, and the ceremony was lovely. It also meant I knew the best places to take pictures! My own graduation was supposed to be held a few months after hers but it was postponed due to COVID-19. We got married this year!'



Nicola Wiggins née Evans (BSc Mathematics and Artificial Intelligence, 2005) and Stuart Wiggins (BSc Chemistry with Analytical Science, 2005)

'Stu and I met in our first year at the University of Birmingham. He lived on floor three of the ill-fated Eden wing of Chamberlain Hall and I lived on the floor above. Despite the fact I had a brief romance with one of his flatmates that year, it didn't discourage Stu from trying his luck at the end of year ball. And the rest, as they say, is history. We have now been together for just over 18 years and will have been married for 11 years this September. We have two boys who have inherited his fantastic eyelashes and a crazy Border Collie/Poodle cross. The University of Birmingham will always hold special memories for us of very happy times.'

Did you meet your significant other at Birmingham? We'd love to hear your story and want to include as many diverse stories as possible, including alumni in our LGBTQ+ community. Send yours to: alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk or tweet @birminghamalum. Find more stories of love online at www.oldjoe.co.uk

YOUR STORIES

Where did your Birmingham education take you?
Share your updates with your fellow alumni by
emailing alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk or
tweet us @birminghamalum using #wearebrumalum

Visit www.oldjoe.co.uk to see more alumni stories
and enter our competition for your chance to
win a University hoodie.

WIN



1967

DR ERNEST YEOH
(MBChB, 1967)

With the next Commonwealth Games coming up, I was reminded of how I met fellow graduate Dr John Aldridge (BSc Clinical Sciences, 1965; MBChB, 1968) at the Kuala Lumpur games in 1998, 31 years after we studied together at the Medical School. We were both serving as team doctors for our respective national teams. John was asking everyone if they had heard of me, so when another England team doctor spotted my name badge, she put us in touch right away! I am now a Professor at MAHSA University in Malaysia. I am also the Chief Medical Officer with the Asia Assistance Network in Malaysia, which provides 24 hour assistance, including air ambulances and medical support.



1988

DR ABEL IDOWU
OLAYINKA
(PhD Geological Sciences, 1988)

I completed my doctoral research in April 1988 and I returned to my native country, Nigeria, on the next available flight to take up a lectureship position in Applied Geophysics with the Department of Geology at the University of Ibadan. The solid training in critical thinking and creativity that I received at Birmingham has been invaluable in my academic career, which I am ever so proud of. I rose through the ranks to become a Professor and subsequently served as Head of Department, Dean of the Postgraduate School and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of the University of Ibadan. I have recently completed an impactful five-year stint as the Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Nigeria's oldest university.



1988 and 1991

NICK GOMPERTZ
(BSc Anatomical Studies, 1988; MBChB, 1991)

After graduating from the Medical School, I worked as a GP for 21 years, during which I invented the Earswitch. The prototype allows people who are unable to communicate verbally or physically to tense a tiny muscle in their ear to operate an assistive keyboard, like the one used by the late Professor Stephen Hawking. Instead of relying on a muscle in the cheek as current models do, this device uses a muscle in the ear, which people may have control over for longer as their condition progresses over time. I was first inspired to develop the Earswitch when I was a medical student at Birmingham, where I met people who had motor neurone disease.



2013

MIRANDA HORN
(BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 2013)

I am an alumna of the fantastic Drama and Theatre Arts course and now work as an actor and filmmaker, having appeared in West End, Olivier-nominated and leading regional theatre. I am currently making an LGBTQ+ short film named *Saltcoats*, which was funded by supporters through Kickstarter. *Saltcoats* is a dark coming-of-age story with a fantasy twist about a young lifeguard in a Scottish seaside town who discovers a mysterious creature in the swimming pool where she works – a Selkie, the seal-woman of Scottish folklore. The story draws on my Scottish background. We will show the film at short and independent film festivals. Search for *Saltcoats* – A Queer Fable on Facebook.

MIGRATION, OPIUM ~~AND~~ EMPIRE: RETHINKING VICTORIAN LITERATURE

BBC Radio 3 named Dr Fariha Shaikh one of its New Generation Thinkers in 2021, following a nationwide search for ten academics with ground-breaking ideas. A literary and cultural historian, her interests span the British Empire in the 19th Century, emigration from Britain to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the literary significance of the Opium Wars. Her work is redefining our understanding of the Victorians – and their legacy today.



Many people are interested in my work because they may have had family who have emigrated.

I've found the personal interest in my work on emigration so fascinating. People love to hear stories about their families, and learn about what migrant life was really like. They also like being able to put contemporary debates on migration into historical perspective.

One of the difficulties of working on colonial migration is knowing that colonial migration led to the erasure of indigenous people, and this genocide is often understood as something which happened in the past, even though it continues to have real-life consequences today.

The 19th Century is fascinating when you look at how the empire fosters increased migration across the world. I used a variety of sources to examine this period of settler migration including emigrant letters, diaries, periodicals and autobiographical writing. I also looked at how these accounts affected novels and art, and how so many of the ideas around family and home were shaped by colonial emigration.

The Opium Wars are a piece of conveniently forgotten history that I've started to research. This trade triangle really doesn't show Britain at its best. At the moment, I'm digging out sources from the archives, but I've become interested in the debates around opium in the periodical press from the time to try to understand how Britain understood itself, and will then look at its impact on literature.

I moved back two centuries when I started working on 19th Century literature! My previous focus had always been around contemporary post-colonial literature so this felt like a big departure for me. There is something so powerful and moving about visiting archives, the physicality of touching old books and letters. My interest really grew out of that.

I was delighted at being named a New Generation Thinker, a joint collaboration between the Arts and Humanities Research Council and BBC Radio 3. I'm passionate about public engagement and this is a great way to highlight my research in 19th Century literature and settler colonial migration. I'm excited to be involved in the whole programme of events bringing my ideas to a wider audience.

The conversations we are having within literature have shifted since I was an undergraduate. We are including more authors of colour, non-heteronormative and more inclusive, not just around race and colour on our curriculum. Students have led this change, and it's shifted things so we get a much wider lens of enquiry. This is great because it means that we can begin to generate more nuanced discussions around empire.

WIN
**DR FARIHA SHAIKH'S
FIVE FAVOURITE BOOKS**

From Alice in Wonderland
to Charles Dickens'
Bleak House.

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DIVERSIFYING THE WORKPLACE

Meet the organisations generating more opportunities for black, asian and female talent – and the individuals supporting each other to succeed.

Why diversity at work matters

Whatever your ethnicity, gender or background, everyone should be able to fulfil their potential at work. So why isn't everyone getting these opportunities?

Sammy Li, Equality and Diversity Advisor for Students, says: 'A high proportion of black and asian students at the University come from the most deprived postcodes, reflecting long-term inequalities. In 2020/21, 45% of students from these most deprived areas were black and 38% were asian, while only 5% were white. These life circumstances mean students face more barriers in both their education and careers, and have fewer resources to help them overcome them.'

How scholarships can make a difference

Scholarships help break the glass ceiling. By attracting and supporting a diverse student body, the University can support increased diversity in the workplace, with targeted financial aid and mentoring that send a strong message of encouragement to them.

The business case for diversity

Organisations really need the talent and insights these students have to offer. In 2019, the 25% most ethnically and culturally diverse companies were over a third more profitable than those in the lowest quartile (McKinsey). Making use of the broadest range of talent, perspectives and ideas gives these companies an edge.

The graduates supporting the next generation of doctors and leaders

Two alumni have created scholarships to support students in entering key professions. Firstly, Victor Thomas (BSc Chemistry, 1963) has funded a medical scholarship for black and asian students in memory of his father, Professor H Oritsejolomi Thomas, who studied medicine at Birmingham and was the first Nigerian to be admitted to the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Secondly, an MBA graduate created an African MBA scholarship. Leke Akinkunmi (MBA Global Banking and Finance, 2013) was one of the first to be supported by it.

Leke says: 'I had saved up for years for the MBA while working in finance, but I took a bad hit when our national currency fell. Before this, I had never applied for financial help for my schooling but the course administrator encouraged me to apply for the African MBA Scholarship.'

'The MBA went beyond academic learning, as it gave me practical tools and resources that remain relevant now. For instance, understanding the consultant's role has proven invaluable, as my most successful projects to date have involved working as an internal consultant.'

'Since completing the MBA, my family and I have tried to pay forward the kindness we received by helping with the education of vulnerable young children in Northern Nigeria and supporting an agri-tech start-up company which aims to improve food distribution.'



FOUR COMPANIES WHICH ARE DIVERSIFYING THEIR WORKFORCE THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

Santander: black inclusion in finance

Santander Universities Black Inclusion Programme offers 3,000 students/graduates a free online course by Finance Unlocked. Topics include financial crises, green finance, cryptocurrency blockchains and more. Students who score highly on the online quizzes are entered to win one of 30 Santander Scholarships worth £1,500.

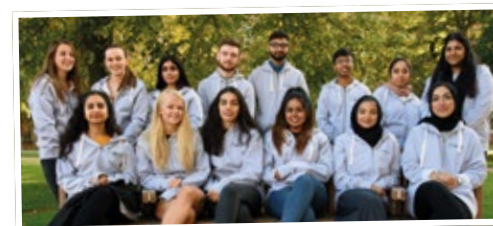
Ayo Ojo (final year BSc Economics student) says: 'The Finance Unlocked platform really exposed me to various career paths within the financial sector that I had little knowledge of. Programmes like these are definitely closing the racial gap within finance.'



Gowling: more diversity in law

International law firm Gowling WLG (UK) has launched its Black Talent in Law bursary scheme with the University. Gowling WLG will support black students at Birmingham Law School through work placements, mentoring from lawyers at the firm and financial contributions. The first three students enrolled on the scheme in September.

Andy Stylianou, Chair of Gowling WLG (UK) LLP, says: 'Black lawyers are under-represented in corporate law firms and we are committed to doing our part to address this and to promote the progression of black students to careers at our firm and the legal profession more widely.'



DeepMind: making AI fair to all

Artificial intelligence (AI) systems are becoming increasingly embedded in our lives. Obum Ekeke, Global Lead, University Relations and Education Partnerships at DeepMind comments: 'AI needs diversity of perspectives and representation from all communities to ensure it can effectively serve society.'

DeepMind is funding four scholarships for black and/or female students who would not be able to study the MSc in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning without financial support. Created in response to falling numbers of female postgraduate computer science students, the DeepMind Scholarships help with tuition fees, living costs, a laptop and attending an international conference.

THE RESULTS: how Lloyds are broadening their workforce and helping communities

The Lloyds Banking Group has changed more than 100 lives through scholarships at Birmingham since 2013, through gifts totalling almost £1 million. Students from low-income households receive annual bursaries, paid summer internships and a dedicated mentor, and in return commit to volunteer at least 100 hours a year to help their communities.



MORE THAN 30%

of graduated Lloyds Scholars progressed onto the Lloyds Banking Group Graduate Scheme

THE RESILIENT GENERATION? LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC



COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the education sector, forcing universities, schools and colleges to quickly move learning online, and cope with ongoing restrictions and uncertainty. Local and national lockdowns, periods of self-isolation, and personal and family circumstances have meant young people have had very different experiences since March 2020. We talked to those learning and teaching during this time, and to Dr Karl Kitching, Reader in Education Policy, about what long-term lessons can be learnt.

Mapping education in Birmingham

From initial chaos to ongoing uncertainty, the challenges to teaching and learning have been felt by everyone, from the youngest nursery pupils, through to university students, teachers and parents. In response, as schools moved into the first lockdown, a team from the School of Education at the University of Birmingham established the Birmingham Education and COVID-19 initiative. This collaboration with Birmingham City Council sought to understand how education adapted in the city during the pandemic. Using a parent survey, interviews and surveys of children and young people, they found a very fragmented picture.

Disparities in support and experience

Dr Kitching explains: 'During the first lockdown we found those who were already disadvantaged or with a special educational need were more likely to face challenges, and young people having really variable experiences of remote learning.'



'There were a lot of issues around devices and access to broadband, with teachers and schools also struggling with the changes and finding it very difficult to respond effectively to students' needs. Experiences were also impacted by parents' ability to support their children, and preparedness and expertise in online teaching within different learning environments.'

Learning from adversity

The term learning loss – a loss of skills and knowledge due to a gap in education, has been coined in the last year, with some fearing a 'lost generation' of those negatively affected by homeschooling. However, despite Zoom fatigue for both educators and young people, some groups have benefited from the move to online learning.

There are definitely benefits around accessibility.

DR KITCHING

'Within universities, recording and captioning lectures has real benefits for international students or those who may struggle with the speed or language used, and this has now been somewhat normalised.'

While education has been disrupted, many learners have become more independent, flexible and adaptable during the pandemic

'I've been so impressed by how students have held it together under such difficult circumstances, and managed to engage in learning and in some cases thrive.'

Can you future-proof education?

Although the future is impossible to predict, what lessons can we learn from the last 18 months that may help us going forwards? For Dr Kitching, we need to start with the basics. 'Access to broadband, IT hardware and software should be treated as a basic public education resource, just as school buildings once were, and be made available by governments to all children and young people. Extra support for teachers at all levels is really needed for online teaching, including issues around student privacy and expectations within online learning environments. And finally, more research is needed.'

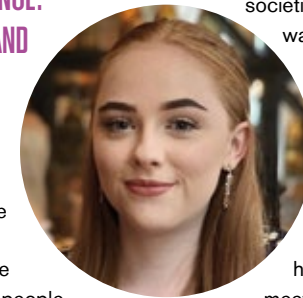
'We really need more research into the long-term impact of the pandemic on education, especially on more vulnerable groups.'

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS AND PRACTICAL COURSES

Jodie Murphy, first year English and Drama student, says: 'Doing a course like drama online is really different. I was lucky to be able to come onto campus and meet people at the start, it's a small course and we've banded together with things like group chats. Connecting via social media has been really important. I've had to think differently, doing physical work and creating pieces in my room is tough, but the lecturers and seminar leaders did lots to help and adapted seminars based on what worked.'

'I think lecturers now really understand the process of delivering online. I've tried to get on campus as much as I can too, and meet as many people as I can. I've learnt that change is really difficult, and you have to be open minded and adapt.'

Kallam Nadra, first year sociology student, says: 'Making friends online has been quite difficult. Understandably, all my first year lectures were recorded and most of my seminars have been online, so although this has been a really flexible way of studying, many including myself have missed informal opportunities to meet course mates. Break out rooms can sometimes feel strained, but online



societies have been a better way to meet people and seem more relaxed.

'We've needed to do it this way to keep everyone safe, and next year I'm hoping to stay on campus. I am really excited to have the opportunity to meet new people and widen my circle of friends.'

THE TEACHER PERSPECTIVE: ONLINE CLASSES AND PUPIL WELLBEING

Kwesi Mills (PGDipEd 2019), a teacher at Four Dwellings Academy, says, 'I was three quarters of my way through my newly qualified teacher (NQT) year when the first lockdown happened. I'd been focused on passing the year, putting theory into practice and getting to grips with the admin.'

'It was really hard at first; we were setting work remotely and working with a really reduced timetable, but a majority of the students were simply not engaging with the work. When the students struggled to do the work they could email me, but how do you explain fractions in an email? I started recording short instructional videos to be sent out with the work, which seemed to help.'

'We weren't taught about online learning during teacher training, but as things continued we got better at it – using Google Classrooms and



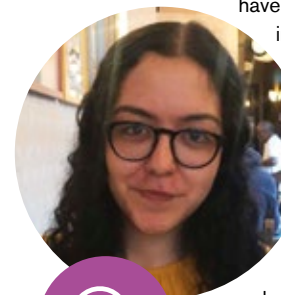
trying to be more interactive. There were some positives: I didn't have to deal with behaviour issues in the classroom, so had more time to explain. I went in once a week to cover children still in school, but found long days spent in front of the screen exhausting.

'When pupils came back into school it was difficult again, we had to retrain them to focus. There were behavioural issues and lots of anxiety. I'm still processing the effects of the year, and so are the kids. I'm trying not to put too much pressure on them regarding the learning time they have lost.'

'There have been benefits, these kids have achieved so much and schools have managed to adapt their technology and meet the kids where they are at. I hope it will make us look at the bigger picture and think about the mental health of our kids. This past year has taught us education has to be about more than just passing exams.'

Extra support on campus:

To help future proof this academic year, all teaching on campus is being supported by digital materials. There has been an extended Welcome period, including in person and online events to help students to make friends.



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Could you help future students access university? Pupils in their last years of school have faced so many challenges during the pandemic. Outreach programmes in schools, summer schools that introduce young people to university life, mentoring, and academic/financial support can help them overcome barriers to accessing a university education. Find out how you can get involved at www.birmingham.ac.uk/action/foreducation

A dissertation to make a difference

Recent graduate Molly Schiller took to Twitter to share the touching motivation behind her Masters research; saving others from the heart condition that her little brother died from.

Molly Schiller's (MSc Biochemistry, 2021) tweet about her Birmingham dissertation went viral on social media this summer, gaining over half a million likes from people around the world.

In 2015, Molly suddenly lost her younger brother Max to an undetected heart condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) when he was just ten years old. She dedicated her Masters dissertation to researching the genetic causes of the condition.

She says: 'I'm honoured that so many people feel Max's story is worth sharing. Everything I do is to try and keep his memory alive. He was a happy and caring little boy loved by so many, and we all miss him every day.'



'I've had responses from so many people sharing their story with me, many with the same condition. It affects 1 in 500, so is fairly common but not enough is known about it. In children it is hard to pick up as their hearts are underdeveloped, which is what happened with Max.'

'My research focused on confirming whether a specific gene caused the condition – and it has produced a very promising result! Finding the right gene means we may be able to screen children for it in future so they get treatment faster. I've just received my results and achieved a First overall. I want to thank my supervisor Dr Katja Gehmlich for all her support and the chance to study the condition. It means so much to be able to make a difference to other families going through something similar.'

Molly has also spent her time at University raising awareness for the charity her family set up in Max's memory. Max's Foundation funds research and supports those affected by genetic heart conditions in children.



Molly and Max growing up together

“It means so much to be able to make a difference to other families going through something similar.”



They work closely with Great Ormond Street Hospital, fund a research nurse to predict HCM in young children and work with Cardiomyopathy UK to fund a Youth Services Manager who finds ways to support young people affected by cardiomyopathies.

To balance the intensity of her studies, Molly's creative outlet during her time at University was being involved with the Guild Drama societies. She even wrote a play during lockdown called *Shadow's Shadows*, a modern adaptation of *Hamlet* that was then put on with the Article19 Theatre Society.

What next for Molly? She says: 'As it's been so emotional doing the research and helping with the charity, I'm going to take a little time to myself and hopefully do some travelling and teach English in Japan. When I'm back I'm planning to get back into the research and explore getting my PhD.'

Everyone at the University is incredibly proud of Molly and we know that Max would be as well.



Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy affects

1 in 500

so is fairly common but not enough is known about it.



What inspired you to write your dissertation?

We'd love to hear your story, send it to us at alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

The quiet green revolution

As world leaders gather for the UN's climate change conference COP26 in Glasgow, amid calls for urgent action to address the climate emergency, the University is using our research expertise, global partnerships, and passionate alumni, staff and students to bring about positive change.

A quiet green revolution is taking place across the University, driven by increased awareness of sustainability and inequality, plus support for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Professor Laura Green OBE, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College of Life and Environmental Sciences, explains: 'Our commitment to society and the environment goes hand-in-hand, and we are increasingly delivering sustainability through our research, student experience, and plans for innovative campus management and development.'

Starting local

The University aims to reach direct use net zero carbon by 2035, reducing use of energy by running our campuses more sustainably and investing in carbon positive activities such as increasing our green spaces. Areas such as the Green Heart on our beautiful campus in Birmingham feature pedestrian, cycle and running routes, and are regularly surveyed to find ways to improve their biodiversity. New buildings including the Engineering building and our new campus in Dubai have been built based on sustainable practices and are highly energy efficient with their own sustainability strategy.

Helping businesses go greener

Key initiatives are helping businesses with the tools, knowledge and resources they need to fulfil their green potential. The University's Lloyds Centre for Responsible Business helps transform business-as-usual thinking, examines how we can harness digital technologies sustainably and much more. The Birmingham Energy Institute at the University has partnered with HSBC UK through the Tyseley Energy Park to offer integrated support, from office and workshop space to energy expertise, to drive growth amongst low-carbon energy businesses. The Institute has also helped over 100 SME's adopt new technology and overcome energy-related challenges, generating a net income of almost £25 million for the regional economy.

Green research

The Exchange (see page 8) is showcasing three major green research projects, which are examining how trees will react to an increase in CO₂ through our philanthropically-funded Birmingham Institute of Forest Research, and demonstrating how hydrogen can power cleaner trains. You can find out more about our latest wide ranging global sustainability research by visiting www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/cop26/

Nurturing the next generation

The next step is embedding and addressing sustainability in all of our education programmes, to make sure our students can be knowledgeable practitioners and advocates for change. The Green Impact initiative allows staff and students to influence environmental practices on campus, from flexible working to reducing our carbon footprint. As Professor Green concludes: 'Our strength is in our people – ground-breaking researchers, innovative staff pushing for positive sustainable changes, and our graduates who are contributing to a more sustainable future.'

Working together to protect our planet

The Guild goes green

Students are passionate advocates of everything green, and supported by the Guild, a range of schemes and societies are making a real difference. The Community Wardens work to make Selly Oak a safer, cleaner and greener place to live. This includes litter picks, canal clear ups, and the hugely popular 'Junkbusters' scheme. Junkbusters collects unwanted household items for the British Heart



Foundation each year as students move out, and has raised over £135,000 since it began ten years ago. Other student-led societies to support biodiversity and waste reduction include Plastic Free UoB, UoB Conservation, Grow with Joe vegetable patch in the Green Heart and Birmingham Hedgehog Friendly Campus.

Campus Transport revolution

The popularity of sustainable travel to and around campus has grown, boosted by scooter hire, discounted public transport and the redevelopment of University Station. The launch of the city's Clean Air Zone, which charges the most polluting vehicles, has been an added incentive. 10% choose to cycle, boosted by the launch of WM Cycle Hire allowing short trip rentals from nine docking stations across campus. Phillip Ellis (LLB Law, 2009), Co-Founder and CEO of Beryl who provided the on-bike technology including the GPS tracking and dashboards for the scheme, says: 'I'm really excited that our innovative technology is supporting sustainable transport at the University.'



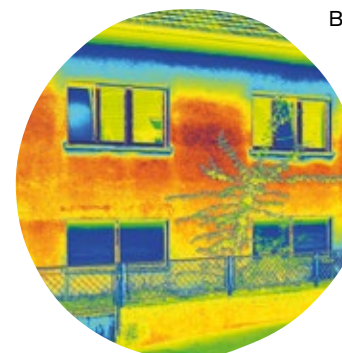
Decarbonising heat

Heat is the largest single source of UK carbon emissions. The University and the Confederation of British Industry, through a Heat Commission, have called on the Government to lead the development and implementation of a national heat decarbonisation strategy.

The commission recommends establishing an impartial organisation to decarbonise transport, reduce industrial emissions, decentralise electricity supplies, support local energy plans devised by local authorities and more.

Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, CBI President and Heat Commission Chair Lord Karan Bilimoria, says:

'Progress towards the UK's net zero emission target is doomed to fail if we don't address the urgent need to decarbonise heat in our homes and buildings.'



University of Birmingham and COP26

Academics, students and partners have contributed to a major collection of climate change themed articles tying in with the COP26 themes, which are available to read now. The students were all winners of a climate change writing competition with the first prize awarded to a compelling article entitled 'The Impact of Militaries on Climate Change'. With a number of events, seminars and talks, and outreach events planned, find out more and get involved at www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/cop26

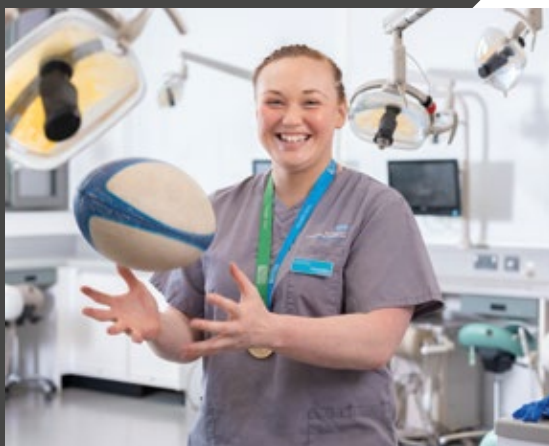
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SUPPORT RESEARCH THAT PROTECTS OUR PLANET

Our researchers are exploring how to protect our trees, prevent plastic pollution and more. Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/action to donate or contact giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk to discuss supporting a major project.

MEET THE GAME-CHANGERS

Meet three students and alumni who are at the forefront of the University sports community and looking forward to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games; a once in a generation opportunity to showcase the brilliance of the city and region.



1.5 BILLION WATCHING OUR CAMPUS

As an Official Partner of the Games, the University of Birmingham will be playing a key role in delivering an outstanding international sporting event to a global TV audience of 1.5 billion.

We will host the hockey on the latest generation, re-laid outdoor pitches, and the squash in our Sport & Fitness centre. The University is also the main village accommodation for athletes.

Are you competing or working at the Commonwealth Games? Let us know!

OVERCOMING AN INJURY THAT COULD HAVE ENDED HER CAREER

Laura Keates
(BSc Zoology, 2010; Fourth year, BDS Dentistry)
England rugby player

Captain of the England Women's Under-19 team, Laura was part of the senior XV that won the 2014 Women's Rugby World Cup. She was preparing for the 2017 World Cup when she injured her Achilles tendon, and only returned to international action in November 2020. Away from sport, she's also finishing her Dentistry degree at Birmingham.

'I was fortunate to receive a sports scholarship during my first degree and that allowed me to balance playing with my studies. After graduation, I worked as a lifeguard and on reception at the Munrow Sports Centre. The rugby team went full-time for eight months as preparation for the 2014 World Cup and the University gave me full backing to do that.

'The help from the sports scholarship programme and staff at the new Sport & Fitness centre meant I could return to international rugby after rupturing my Achilles. They have got me fitter, stronger, and more robust after a potential career-ending injury. It was really rewarding to train in such an elite environment.

'I've always focused on rugby, and it has been at the forefront of everything I did. But I wanted a career. My Mum suggested some work experience; I gave it a go and really enjoyed the work. I think it uses similar skills to rugby – teamwork, dedication, communication, and creativity.'



COMPETING WHILE COACHING OTHERS

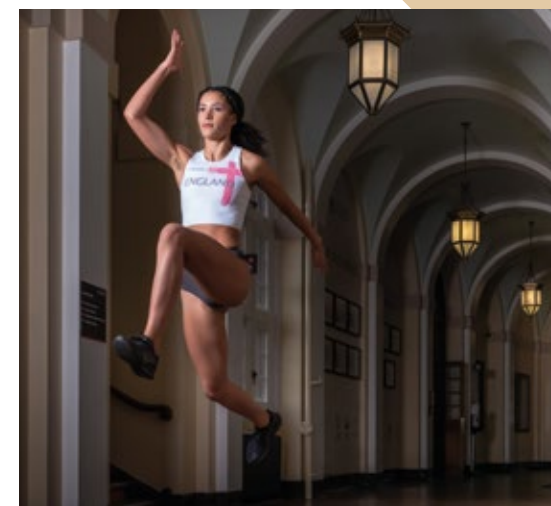
Luke Gunn
(BSc Sports and Material Science, 2006)
Head of Athletics, University of Birmingham

A four-time winner of the British 3,000m steeplechase, Luke also competed in the event for England at the Commonwealth Games in 2006, 2010, and 2014. He began coaching in 2010 and has seen numerous athletes from the University progress to international honours.

'Being the Head of Athletics at the University of Birmingham is an immense honour. I never thought the job would come up at such a young age, while I was finishing my own athletic career. I feel very fortunate to be heading up a team of coaches at my alma mater.

'As an athlete, and a coach for the Birmingham Games, I want the England team to be sweeping all the medals. As an adopted Brummie, I just want us to put on an amazing show for everybody. We've all been through it during the pandemic and hopefully this will be the first major championships without any restrictions, in which everyone can celebrate sport and the city, all at the same time.

'Having competed in three Games myself (Melbourne, Delhi and Glasgow) the atmosphere for each was electric. Birmingham will be a place where people want to book off the whole month and absorb it all when the Games are here.'



A SCHOLARSHIP AS A SPRINGBOARD TO GREAT HEIGHTS

Laura Zialor
(Third year, BSc Sports, Physical Education
and Coaching Science)
High jumper

Laura was a triple jumper as recently as 2019, switching to compete in the high jump after trying it out in training. She's been making big leaps upwards ever since, coming fourth in the British Championships only six months later, rapidly reaching the qualification standard for Birmingham 2022 and leaping 1.90m in June this year – the 23rd best of all time for a UK athlete.

'My parents are my biggest fans and funded me for many years. Mum would drive me to London from our home in Milton Keynes twice a week. I received support from SportsAid and then from the University as a scholar, which has taken the pressure off my family.

'I was recognised on the talent identification programme in my first year at the University, a Club scholarship in my second year and a full scholarship in third year.

'Trying to take on both the triple and high jump was a little bit much for me, as both are very technical. I really enjoyed the high jump and decided to make the switch - which was the best decision of my life. I've excelled and done more than I could have imagined in this. Now I want to keep progressing and win medals for England and Great Britain in the major championships.'

Want to see more young people with sporting talent fulfil both their athletic and academic potential? You can donate to our alumni-funded sports scholarship programme, or fund your own scholars like alumnus Robert Moyle (BSc Civil Engineering, 1973) has done for the last 15 years. He says: 'I have been so proud to see the students I supported compete, knowing I was helping them build a lifelong career at the same time.'

Email giving@contact.birmingham.ac.uk to start a conversation.

BIRMINGHAM ACTION



Action taken

So many of you have given time or made donations to the Birmingham In Action campaign, helping to take action on access

to education, the environment, youth mental health, cancer, COVID-19, migration and more.

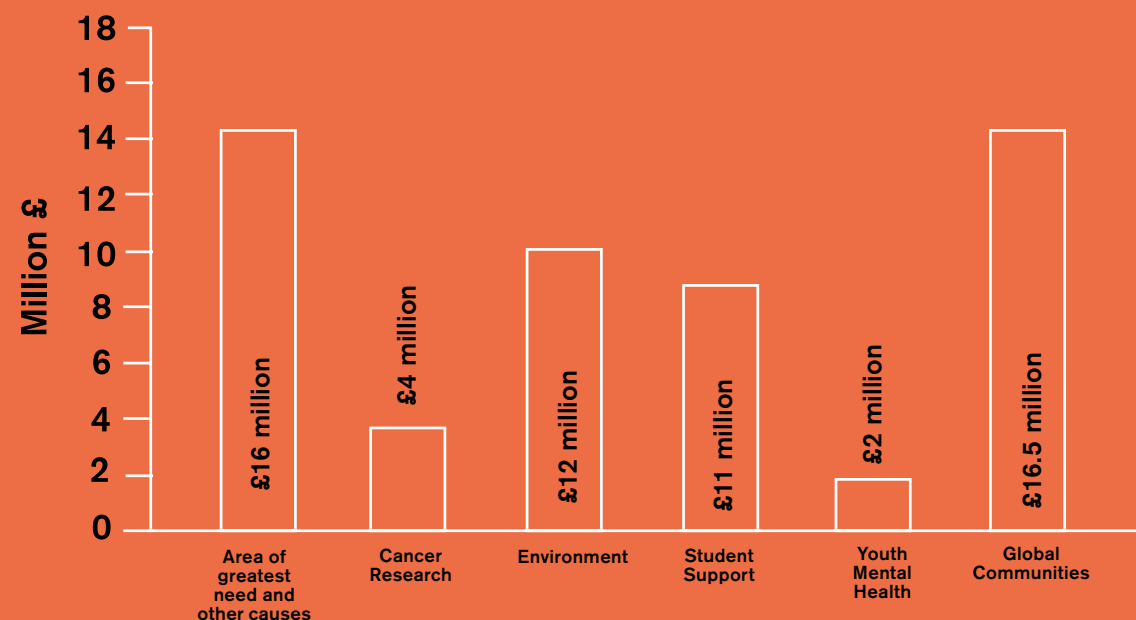
More than 7,600 students supported

Together you have donated more than

£62 million

to support students and vital research

THANK YOU



 **5,693 alumni volunteers means** 



81,386 HOURS
of volunteering
(that's more than
nine years)

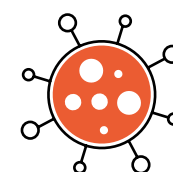


3,700 STUDENTS
mentored



1,998 ALUMNI
sharing their
expertise in guest
lectures etc

Major new initiatives funded as part of **Birmingham In Action** include:



Research into a rare childhood cancer is being funded by charity Alice's Arc



Work preventing school bullying is being funded by HSBC UK, to address long term mental health issues



A new research centre focused on supporting youth mental health is being funded by the Wolfson Foundation

965

of you
donated a total of

£123,152

this summer to find new
treatments for cancer



I want other young people to have that same chance I had.

Rosemary Harris (LLB, 1980) legacy pledger



Since 2019, legacy gifts in wills have given £1 million towards supporting students, a new online medical teaching platform, a new space for our entrepreneurs to thrive and much more.

Help Birmingham take action against some of the biggest global challenges we face.
Join in at www.birmingham.ac.uk/action



DONATE TO THE CAMPAIGN

Your generosity could help students and researchers



GIVE TIME

Your time and expertise could help change lives



SPREAD THE WORD

Share the campaign and your story of education



THE GIRL WHO GRADUATED

Niamh's student journey – and the support that helped her graduate

Access to Birmingham (A2B) ambassador and mentee, Niamh Wilson (BSc Psychology, 2021), shares her journey from summer school participant to graduate and aspiring entrepreneur.



2018–2021

HELPED PUPILS FOLLOW IN HER FOOTSTEPS

'My proudest achievement at University was giving back to the Outreach team. I went on school visits and mentored Year 12 students at the summer school and it was very rewarding to see what they went on to do next and to give back to something that helped me.'

FROM JAN 2021

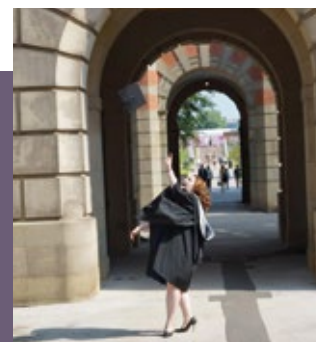
GAINED SUPPORT FROM A MENTOR

'Having a mentor has been an amazing experience. Birmingham graduate Paul gives me the best life advice and chats to me every week on Zoom. I really believe your network is your net worth and Paul has helped me to grow my network massively. I'm so grateful!'

JULY 2021

GRADUATED

'University has gone far beyond my studies and into character development. It's been a transformative few years and has moulded me into an adult who's ready to graduate.'



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2021

This summer marked 120 years since the first graduation celebrations on campus and also a first for graduation celebrations at the University. With advice from Birmingham City Council Public Health and COVID-19 measures in place, graduates were invited to campus with two guests to celebrate their achievements in a festival-style outside event. Located in the beautiful Green Heart, graduates and their guests enjoyed food tents, afternoon tea hampers, speeches and a live band. To mark the special occasion, they received a bespoke memento scroll designed by Helena Checkley (BSc Economics, 2018), a free professional photograph and a video clip of their moment on stage in their cap and gown in the Great Hall. A virtual celebration was held for those who couldn't come to campus and our Class of 2020 were also invited back for a celebration in September.



PATHWAYS TO BIRMINGHAM

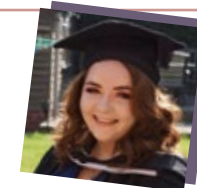
Our Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) outreach programme is designed to inspire 16 to 18 year old pupils from low-income or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds. Including the Access to Birmingham (A2B) programme, it gives young people an insight into higher education and careers, and support throughout the university application process. Students who successfully complete a Pathways to Birmingham programme and apply to the University of Birmingham will receive two offers from the University of Birmingham - the standard offer and a Pathways to Birmingham offer, typically two grades below the standard offer. Students receive mentoring and enhanced careers support. **PLUS** students who successfully complete Pathways to Birmingham and become a student at the University may be eligible for financial support. Students can receive up to £3,500 per year of study, jointly funded by the University and philanthropic donations, to help pay for books, travel and living costs.

Watch Niamh's journey in our Old Joe video:
www.oldjoe.co.uk/article/girl-who-graduated



After graduating, Niamh plans to start her own business in property development, with a long-term goal to help provide more affordable student living. She also wants to pay forward the support she received by becoming a mentor to someone in the future.

'I'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who has been a part of my journey. I had such a confidence boost and belief in myself from all the alumni I spoke to. You might not realise that those tiny conversations you have with a student when you are at an event have such an impact.'



AUGUST 2017

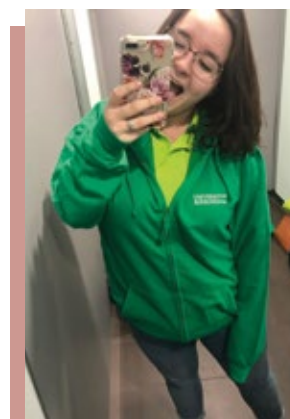
ATTENDED THE ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME SUMMER SCHOOL

While studying for her A levels, Niamh was invited to the free Academic Enrichment Programme summer school, which helped give an insight into University life and encouraged her to apply to Birmingham

SEPTEMBER 2018

A2B AMBASSADOR AND BURSARY RECIPIENT

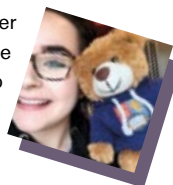
Thanks to generous support from graduates, Niamh was awarded an A2B bursary, which helped her travel back to visit and take care of her mum who suffered a stroke. Niamh became an ambassador for the A2B programme. 'I met so many friends on the A2B programme and we all have the mind-set of helping the younger generation get to University.'



AUGUST 2018

RECEIVED HER A LEVEL RESULTS

Inspired by the summer school, she earned the grades she needed to get a place at Birmingham and decided to study Psychology



THE GHOSTS OF CAMPUS

Many alumni have heard the legend that if a student walks under Old Joe clock tower while it is chiming, they may fail their degree; but did you know campus also has its own collection of ghost stories? Whether you believe or not, these tales are a fascinating insight into the University's history.

THE WARTIME NURSE OF ASTON WEBB

Many Birmingham students will spend time in Aston Webb going to lectures or the Student Hub, making the building a hive of activity during the day. But anyone who has walked along the corridors at night will tell you it's a much quieter – and creepier – place. There's talk of hearing footsteps ahead (or is it behind?) you, with no-one in sight; or shadows moving in your peripheral vision. Who could it be? Rumours suggest it's the restless spirit of a nurse or patient of the First Southern General Hospital, based at the University during the First World War.

You can read more about the hospital, and the creation of Aston Webb, at www.oldjoe.co.uk/article/history-great-hall



THE FRIENDLY GHOSTS OF UNIVERSITY HOUSE

When University House was still a hall of residence (up to 2002), a student's brother reported meeting a friendly spirit in her room. A woman in black politely asked him if she could walk past him as he lay on the floor in his sleeping bag. He felt her step over him, watched her attend to a task in the corner of the room and then vanish, leaving a chill breeze in her wake. He ruled out any student pranks, checked his sister was in bed throughout and he was quite sober!

Elsewhere a ghost in the dining room scared the cook, who refused to go into the dining room alone afterwards, and a mischievous poltergeist stopped moving things around after the University chaplain blessed a student's room. He commented, 'No harm in a friendly ghost!'



THE GREY LADY OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL

The best known of the strange sightings at University House is the Grey Lady. She is said to be seen in the original building within Birmingham Business School, which was used to house nurses from 1914-1919 who were treating those with war injuries in the Great Hall. Grace Surman (BSc Business Management with Communications, 2009) was told of the rumours while working as a student ambassador there. 'The offices in the building used to be bedrooms, and still have their original features – fireplaces, cornicing and wrought iron grates. The first corner of the building feels colder and darker than the others, and it was here that a grey lady still dressed in her nurse's uniform has been spotted, floating around minding her own business. She apparently fell down a spiral staircase.'

THE ROMAN CENTURION IN THE BIOSCIENCES BASEMENT

Did you know the area by the University train station and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was once a Roman fort? Metchley Fort was occupied for around 150 years from approximately AD 48. Lorraine Wallace, Research Fellow in the Medical School, shares her first-hand account of seeing the ghost of a Roman centurion on campus.

'One day I went into the Biosciences basement to clear out the freezer, which was located at the end of a long thin corridor. I knew I was the only one in the basement at the time so when I saw a tall straight-backed figure disappear behind the doorway, I assumed it was my work colleague trying to scare me. I decided to try to scare him instead so I crept down the corridor and rounded the corner and said 'boo'. When I was faced with an empty space, it struck me that I had just seen a ghost – I went white as a sheet and raced upstairs to share the experience with my colleague. While I can't be certain it was a Roman centurion there are others in the department who report similar experiences and seeing figures wearing Roman helmets.'



Did you have any mysterious experiences on campus? How did you celebrate Hallowe'en as a student? Email us at alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk.



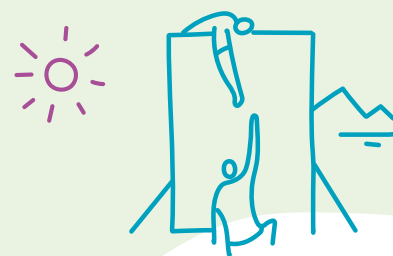
New initiative *supports* and celebrates students in recovery from addiction

It is estimated that up to one in 20 people have overcome a problem with alcohol, drugs, gambling or other addictions. For young people in early abstinent recovery, education can form a crucial part of their recovery programme. However, the transition to University may present many challenges, especially combined with leaving family and friends and the social demands of campus life.

Dr Ed Day, an expert in addiction psychiatry at the Institute for Mental Health (IMH) and the Government's Drug Recovery Champion, and Masters student Luke Trainor (BA Political Science and Social Policy, 2020) are launching a pioneering programme to celebrate and support University of Birmingham students in recovery. Their goal is to inform and shape campus recovery nationwide.

A recovery programme developed and led by students

With mental health and wellbeing high on the agenda for universities, a new project is offering tailored support for University of Birmingham students recovering from addiction. Working closely with Wellbeing Services, the programme is based on a highly successful 'Collegiate Recovery Programme' popular in the USA. The programme, known as 'Better Than Well,' offers peer-led support with students taking part in meetings to celebrate milestones, share concerns and build coping strategies. Additional activities will include drop-in services, 'dry' social activities, sport and fitness, and opportunities for volunteering and service to the local community. The programme is funded by a generous donation from the CrEdo Foundation, and will be designed by students, supporting their peers to maximise educational and social opportunities, and continuing a personal programme of recovery from addiction.



Support through education; how Luke is using his experiences to help others

For Programme Manager Luke Trainor the wider benefits of being supported through education are key. 'My own experience of being homeless through to recovery meant starting at the University of Birmingham felt hugely daunting. There is still a lot of stigma around addiction, so I didn't discuss it with fellow students, and at the time there wasn't a network of support available. A Pathways to Birmingham scholarship (formerly known as Access to Birmingham) really helped to remove some of the barriers for me to get to



University, and this programme offers wider support for recovering students to stay in education, celebrate their recovery journey, broaden their knowledge and experience, and build the skills to successfully transition to life beyond graduation.'

Increasing awareness across our communities

As well as benefiting the students themselves, the project aims to help educate and inform the wider community, and test a model that could be replicated in universities nationwide. Luke explains: 'Students in recovery have huge potential, and have overcome huge challenges to get to where they are. A big part of this project will be educating the wider community about addiction and recovery, from neuroscience and psychology to social stigma. It's a fascinating subject, and the practical application can transform the lives of students both on campus in Birmingham and beyond.'



Did you know?

More than 300,000 people seek help for some form of addiction in the UK each year. There is evidence that addiction among students is increasing, although the number of young people seeking traditional forms of help is decreasing.

There are many pathways to recovery, as well as being abstinent. These can involve good physical and mental health, and full participation in the rights, roles and responsibilities of society.



**BIRMINGHAM
ACTION**

To find out more or to support the 'Better Than Well' project please email giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk

FOREVER FRIENDS

Maple Bank mates

Mark Bruns (BA International Relations and Russian Studies, 2010) says: 'The six of us started University in 2006 and met at Maple Bank. We were excited to be at Maple Bank since it was right between Broad Street and campus. Maple Bank itself had lots of fun events including open air concerts and speed dating nights. We loved the community feel and three of our flatmates joined the Maple Bank football team. Whilst we all studied on different courses, we had plenty of time to socialise, meet new friends and enjoy everything Birmingham had to offer. After Maple Bank, we moved into a six bedroom house on Selly Hill Road. Whilst space was a premium, we made sure to get out and about as much as possible. We loved going out for baltis in Selly Oak or for a big fry up after a night out at Café Face.

'Ten years later we all met for a reunion at Matthew's house who still lives close to Birmingham. He organised a lovely dinner party and went all in with his cooking skills. All of us were able to make it apart from Paula. It was lovely to catch up, speak about the things we loved doing, what people were up to now and how we are all doing in our new lives. Whilst we now all have our own families, jobs and live in different cities, it was lovely to spend time reminiscing about the times when the most difficult decision we had to make was which pub we'd go to on a students' night and how we were supposed to make it to the 9am lecture the next morning.'

Whether you meet in halls of residence, lectures, societies or nights out, University is a place to make friends for life. Friendship groups share their stories of meeting and the impact of their friendship.



Then and now: (Left to right in the top photo)

Mark Bruns (BA International Relations and Russian Studies, 2010), Matthew Wedge (BA Medieval and Modern History, 2009; MA British First World War Studies, 2011), Hannah Wright (BA Modern Languages, 2010), Paula Perry (née Gloger) (BA Modern Languages with Psychology, 2010), Luke Wilkinson (BA Classics and Archaeology, 2009) and Stephen Potter (BA Geology and Geography, 2009).



The ripple effect: a career in memory of a best friend

Clare Abbotts (BSc Psychology and Sports Science, 2000) says of Matt Kendall (BSc Psychology and Sports Science, 2000): 'From the first day Matt and I met in 1997 in Tennis Courts, we immediately hit it off. I didn't know then what an impact he would make on my life. There were times throughout our studies that we pulled each other through and we stayed really good friends for more than 20 years after University.

'After graduating, Matt stayed in Birmingham and dedicated his time to making a difference in his community. Around 10 years ago he was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer, and bravely fought against it for years. But eventually we had the worst news. Three weeks before he passed away he got a group of us together to set up the Matt Kendall Foundation to help young people overcome financial disadvantage and find jobs in Birmingham, something he was very passionate about. In that short time we raised £60,000.

'His was one of those golden friendships. I have never met anybody stronger, more compassionate and full of hope. He taught me what was important in life and in addition to becoming the trustee of the foundation, I also started to train as a bereavement counsellor. I currently volunteer at Katharine House Hospice in Stafford as part of my training. The impact he made on me is now rippling out to so many others and I can't even imagine how many more he must have inspired.

'If I ever come across a situation I can't cope with I think to myself, 'What would Matt have done?' and that always helps me to find the answer.'



Matt Kendall
(BSc Psychology and Sports Science, 2000)



I HAVE NEVER MET ANYBODY STRONGER, MORE COMPASSIONATE AND FULL OF HOPE.



Clare Abbotts
(BSc Psychology and Sports Science, 2000)

Do you still meet up with your friendship group from University? Do you have any traditions when you meet up? We'd love to hear your story. Email us alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk

ADDRESSING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

The last 18 months have left many facing job losses, closing their businesses and even losing their homes. Briefings by the University's Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM) share our research on how changes to financial policy could support those who have been hit hardest.



REBUILDING HOW OUR FINANCES WORK

The pandemic has highlighted much in our economy that isn't working as well as it could for many people. What changes could we make to our systems to help tackle economic insecurity and make people more resilient to financial shocks?

For 10 years, CHASM has been carrying out research on financial wellbeing and resilience. When the financial impact of the pandemic began to emerge, CHASM rapidly investigated the key issues, including how we can support the most financially vulnerable and provide fairer pay for key workers.

COVID-19 has brought about policy changes and operational responses that most would have thought impossible a year ago, from furloughing employees to mass mortgage holidays.

CHASM's research is now exploring how to create a better long-term legacy of this period in terms of financial wellbeing – not just a return to what we had before.

'WHY FINANCIAL WELLBEING MATTERS TO ME'

The CHASM team are so grateful to Birmingham graduate Andrew Fisher (BSc Economics, 1982), who has financially supported the Centre for over 10 years. He says: 'CHASM's work has never been more important, given the impact of the pandemic on levels of economic insecurity, wellbeing, poverty and debt. I wanted to put something back into society through Birmingham because universities make such a significant contribution to community, wellbeing, social mobility and health.'



WHAT CHASM HAS DELIVERED TO DATE

- **Increasing financial inclusion:** Our Financial Inclusion Monitoring Reports led to the appointment of government ministers for financial inclusion.
- **Shaping policy on savings for low-income households:** Our work has led to better access to savings opportunities for those on lower incomes.

SIX KEY IDEAS GOVERNMENTS NEED TO THINK ABOUT FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

CHASM's Build Back Better Briefings highlight research from Birmingham and around the world. To read the full briefs and more ideas, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/chasm/research/build-back-better.aspx

CASH VS CONTACTLESS

Social distancing measures make life more difficult for those who rely on cash to pay for goods and services. How can governments stop digital exclusion leading to further financial exclusion?



CHARITIES AND COVID-19

Uncertainty is likely to affect what people give to charity, how much to give, which causes to give to, when to give and how to give. How might charities and those who rely on them be affected by the crisis?



THE HOME AS A WORKPLACE

If working from home becomes a long-term trend, what might this mean for the decisions we make about where we want to live and what space we need? How could this affect the housing market?



SOCIAL SECURITY

COVID-19 meant many families needed support urgently, when jobs disappeared overnight. With a five-week wait for a first payment, is our benefits system fit for a pandemic?



DEBT AND POVERTY

The COVID-19 crisis looks likely to result in a significant rise in poverty and household debt in the UK. Is it time for long-term fundamental changes, such as a universal basic income?



THE COST OF GETTING SICK

Statutory sick pay has become a key issue in whether those who need to self-isolate can afford to stay at home. Do we need to restructure sick pay for the benefit of everyone?



**BIRMINGHAM
ACTION**

HELP SUPPORT LIFE-CHANGING RESEARCH
Would you like to find out more about supporting a research centre like CHASM, or supporting a PhD student who could revolutionise our thinking on key issues? Contact giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk



FROM PhD STUDENT TO CENTRE DIRECTOR

Dr Louise Overton, Director of CHASM and Lecturer in Social Policy, studied her PhD at Birmingham after her MA in Social Policy. She shares how having the right support at PhD level can enable someone to go on to produce world-class research.

'As a PhD student, I was lucky to receive funding from the Economic and Social Research Council and Age UK to investigate equity release in retirement. A CASE studentship to support collaboration with partners helped me speak to people in financial services, charities and elsewhere, increasing the reach and scope of my research.'

'My PhD research findings were covered in *The Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Express*, BBC online and more, sharing them with those who need the information. I am now building on this within CHASM, to include research on pension decision-making and paying for care.'

'CHASM means I can bring people's financial needs to the attention of policy makers and key stakeholders, and collaborate with colleagues analysing different systems internationally. I'm so glad to be able to support the next generation of PhD students at Birmingham, helping them undertake research that will level the playing field and make society fairer.'

NEW PHASE BEGINS IN DUBAI

With cutting-edge technology and sustainable practices, the new University of Birmingham Dubai campus will deliver a truly world-class physical and digital experience for students.

EXPO 2020

The University of Birmingham Dubai will be making the most of being engaged with EXPO 2020, the world expo being held in the region from 1 October to 31 March 2022.

Millions of visitors are expected to visit the 192 country and three themed pavilions on sustainability, mobility and opportunity. Our students in Dubai will experience EXPO2020 through complimentary student access as part of the EXPO Universities programme.

With innovative teaching and research spaces and the latest in digital technology, students at the University of Birmingham Dubai will enjoy a 21st century experience when the new campus opens.

Birmingham is the first of the top 100 universities in the world to establish a campus in this rapidly developing international education hub. The Dubai campus was built to extend educational excellence and equal opportunities to students in the Middle East and neighbouring countries.

The new building will provide an academic home for up to 2,900 students, a community for Birmingham alumni in the region and a hub for community outreach and engagement activities.

Designed in the shape of a crescent moon to recall the Aston Webb buildings in Birmingham, the bespoke facility visually fuses the history and stature of the Edgbaston campus with the heritage, tradition and beauty of Arabic culture and architecture.

Inside, students will enjoy a learning environment with flexible study spaces ranging from large lecture theatres and laboratories through to smaller seminar and tutorial rooms, all with a 'digital first' approach to learning.

New programmes from across all five Colleges at the University are being introduced for the new academic year, including Masters degrees in Bioinformatics, Urban and Regional Planning and Financial Management.

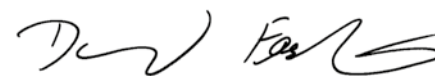
Do you live in Dubai or the United Arab Emirates? Stay in touch with the latest news from campus by emailing your contact details to alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk

The last word

In my last column for *Old Joe*, before I retire as Vice-Chancellor and Principal, I want to thank the University of Birmingham community for the support it has shown me and the University over the last 12 years. It has been a great honour to lead this institution and be part of its legacy. In the last 12 years we have, together, transformed our research and education, refreshed our civic mission, and taken Birmingham to the world in new and imaginative ways. Now, I pass on the responsibility for leading the University of Birmingham to my successor, Professor Adam Tickell, who will take up the post in January 2022.

Speaking about his appointment, Professor Adam Tickell said, 'I am thrilled to be taking on this exciting role at a crucial time for the University. The Birmingham I am returning to is transformed from the one I left five years ago. It has been led exceptionally and has real academic strength, outstanding facilities and opportunities for students, state-of-the-art research facilities, and strong collaborations. I am looking forward to re-engaging with both the University and the wider region, drawing on the fresh perspectives and approaches that I have developed during my time at Sussex, to work with the whole community, including our alumni and friends, to take Birmingham to even greater success.'

In congratulating Professor Tickell on his appointment, let me reflect on our University's motto, *Per Ardua ad Alta*, "through hard work to great heights". We at the University are proud of all the hard work that has contributed to our success so far. The platform we find ourselves on today, is one of an ambitious, innovative, and bold University, and I have every confidence that Professor Tickell will lead this great institution to even greater heights.



Best wishes,
Professor Sir David Eastwood DL
Vice-Chancellor, Principal and donor

Professor Tickell has spent the last five years as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sussex and has become a respected and influential voice for higher education nationally through his work with government and major research and funding organisations. Adam is known to many at the University for the several years he spent in leadership positions at Birmingham, including serving as Provost and Vice-Principal, and we are delighted to be welcoming him back to the University.



MAKE YOUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Once you've lived your life to the fullest and taken care of your friends and family, including a gift in your will is a simple way to keep on making the world a better place.

You could help give young people facing disadvantages the opportunity to go to University, or help tackle the major challenges we all face, from cancer to protecting our planet.

Join hundreds of other alumni and friends who have included the University of Birmingham in their will.

- Your thoughtfulness could give the next generation of bright young minds the chance to fulfil their potential.
- Your foresight could give Birmingham's researchers the resources to respond quickly to future needs, as they did during COVID-19.
- Your passion for the subject you studied could help others follow in your footsteps in your School or College.

BIRMINGHAM YOUR WILL

Watch our video to see the difference Birmingham alumni like you are making for future generations.

Visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/action/legacy



www.birmingham.ac.uk
www.oldjoe.co.uk



alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk



University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends



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UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Development and Alumni Relations Office
Birmingham Research Park, Vincent Drive
Birmingham, B15 2SQ, UK

