



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

COLLEGE OF
MEDICAL AND
DENTAL SCIENCES

MEDLINES

2016. For alumni and friends



One of Europe's leading clinical trials units
welcomes new Director – Professor Peter Brocklehurst

Also in this issue: Life sciences at Birmingham; Widening access to medicine; Leaving a lasting legacy

Welcome from Professor David Adams, Head of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2016 issue of *Medlines*, our magazine for alumni and friends of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences (MDS).

A great deal has happened since I took up the post as Head of College 18 months ago. Working closely with our colleagues across campus, particularly in the Colleges of Life and Environmental Sciences and Engineering and Physical Sciences, we've made huge strides to implement our Life Sciences strategy. The strategy places strong emphasis on the need for multidisciplinary approaches to deliver our ambitious global research aims and to equip our students with the knowledge and skills to become outstanding biomedical and healthcare professionals of the future. Find out more on the latest developments on page 4.

I'm immensely proud of the work we're continuing to do around widening participation. It is crucial that our students and ultimately our workforce reflect the society in which they will be working. Find out how we are leading in this area on page 12.

If we are going to translate our research into real impact for the population we need to work closely with industry where there are complementary skills and resources. To this end we have put in place a new and dynamic Business Engagement team who are doing an outstanding job in developing new partnerships and collaborations with a range of small, medium and large sized companies (see page 8).

You'll find plenty more in this issue, including an interview with alumnus and Chair of the Sands Cox Charity, Professor Martin Kendall, plus all the latest news from the College and our alumni.

New appointments

This year has already seen several new high-profile appointments. Professor Subrata Ghosh is our new Director of the Institute of Translational Medicine and Professor of Gastroenterology. Professor Peter Brocklehurst recently joined us as the new Director of the Birmingham Clinical Trials Unit. You can read more about Peter in his interview on page 14. Professor David Wraith, former Professor of Experimental Pathology at the University of Bristol, also joins us as the new Institute Director for Immunology and Immunotherapy.

Former Head of Periodontology Professor Iain Chapple is our new Head of School of Dentistry, taking over from Professor Philip Lumley who has done an outstanding job over the past decade in making our dental school one of the best in the world. Phil will now concentrate on his role as Deputy Head of the College.

Finally, we are all very proud of Dr Helen Stokes-Lampard, who has been elected to the Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners. This is the most senior position in primary care in the country with a major remit in shaping national policy. Helen follows in the footsteps of Professor Sir Michael Drury, our first professor of general practice, who held the post in the 1980s.

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue, please keep sending in your stories and memorabilia for us to share. Keep in touch at mds-alumni@contacts.bham.ac.uk

With very best wishes,
Professor David Adams
(MBChB 1981; MD 1990)
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following alumni who were recognised in the New Year's Honours List:

- Dr Jenny Harries (MBChB, 1984), Public Health England's Director for the South of England, was made OBE for services to public health
- Dr Darren (Ron) Daniels (MBChB, 1994) Chief Executive, the UK Sepsis Trust was made OBE for services to sepsis sufferers

Contents

Welcome	2
MDS in the news	3
Life Sciences at Birmingham	4
Alumni profile: Professor Martin Kendall	6
Business Engagement team	8
Successes for the College of Medical and Dental Sciences and the University of Birmingham	9
Alumni news	10
Widening access to medicine	12
Interested in furthering your studies?	13
Staff profile: Professor Peter Brocklehurst	14
Leaving a lasting legacy	15
Get involved	16

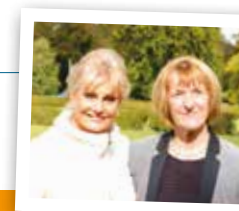
MDS in the news

Sit to Rise test on TV

Professor Janet Lord, Director of the Institute of Inflammation and Ageing, appeared on the BBC's 'How to Stay Young' programme in April, offering her expertise on the 'Sit to Rise' test, an easy-to-administer test that measures flexibility and strength in the elderly.

The show, presented by Angela Rippon, was filmed last year with a group of volunteers, including some of our Birmingham 1,000 Elders cohort, as part of a series investigating the latest research that could help slow down the ageing process.

Find out more at www.birmingham.ac.uk/inflammation-ageing



£1.2 million funding awarded for medical research

Earlier this year, we were delighted to announce that the University was awarded £1.2 million from the Medical Research Council (MRC) to help

accelerate the translation of innovative medical research into industry and out to patients.

The funding, which forms part of a £23.2 million boost from the MRC to UK universities, was announced by Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson as part of his visit to the Medical School.

New Birmingham Dental Hospital and School of Dentistry opens

We're delighted that the new £50 million Birmingham Dental Hospital and School of Dentistry opened its doors to staff, students and patients in April.

The state-of-the-art building offers high-quality dental services, world-class research facilities and a modern learning environment for our 600+ students and trainees.

Former Head of School of Dentistry, Professor Philip Lumley says, 'We are immensely grateful to our alumni whose vision and generosity have helped to create such a fantastic facility.' Find out more at www.birmingham.ac.uk/newdentalschool



Our Birmingham Heroes

Earlier this year saw the launch of our latest Heroes campaigns that focused on the research we are carrying out into miscarriages and cancer immunology.

In April we became the leading partner of Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research, the largest centre for miscarriage research in Europe. Working with partner universities and NHS trusts, we are bringing doctors, scientists and patients together to understand and prevent miscarriages.

In May, Professor Gary Middleton delivered a Heroes lecture on cancer immunology to alumni and friends, showcasing how Birmingham is among the leaders in this fast evolving field.

Find out more at www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/heroes

Med student is a world-class athlete

We are immensely proud of MBChB student Sarah McDonald, who was recently ranked second in the UK in the 1500 metres. A European finalist for team GB, Sarah narrowly missed out on Olympic selection by 0.18 seconds. Sarah is splitting her fourth year over two years to allow her to focus on her running and prepare for next year's World Championships. You can follow Sarah's progress on Twitter @SarahAMcdonald



Research shows flu vaccine is more effective in the morning

A recent University study has shown that administering flu vaccinations in the morning rather than the afternoon could induce greater, and therefore more protective, antibody responses. 276 adults aged over 65 took part in the trial as part of the winter flu vaccination programme. Professor Janet Lord, a co-investigator on the study, said, 'Our results suggest that by shifting the time of vaccinations to the morning we can improve their efficiency with no extra cost to the health service.'

The team will now investigate further with a large-scale study.



For more MDS news, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/mdsnews

Life Sciences at Birmingham: delivering the full circle of translational medicine

What are Life Sciences?

Life Sciences are broadly defined as the study of living organisms including micro-organisms, plants, animals and humans. Although we have research groups in all of these areas, the main focus of our strategy is research into human health and promoting healthy living by maintaining quality of life and developing new treatments for disease.

DID YOU KNOW?

The UK Life Sciences sector represents a significant proportion of UK business, with around 4,500 pharmaceutical, medical biotechnology and medical technology companies in the UK. Together, they employ 165,000 staff and have an annual turnover of more than £50 billion.

Our vision and strategy

The University of Birmingham's vision is to deliver the full circle of translational medicine and to be recognised globally as an outstanding, distinctive centre for life sciences research and education. We are getting closer to realising this vision through our Life Sciences strategy.

The strategy consolidates and builds on the vast array of life sciences research and teaching that is taking place across the whole campus. This includes the research we are carrying out to tackle big health issues such as cancer, ageing, brain function, chronic and rare diseases, trauma and antibiotic resistance, as well as the work

around understanding the role of the environment, exercise and nutrition in maintaining health.

'Our strategy is instrumental in delivering the region's vision of Birmingham as a powerhouse for the Life Sciences sector', explains Professor David Adams, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Head of College of Medical and Dental Sciences and Director of Birmingham Health Partners. 'The aim is to make the city one of the leading national contributors to the successful delivery of the government's vision to improve health care, contribute to economic growth, and make the UK the best place for investment in Life Sciences research.'

'It not only ensures that we react rapidly to develop solutions to global health challenges but also that we continue to deliver world-leading education to the next generation of health professionals and scientists.'

Here are just some of the many different Life Science developments that are taking place across the University...

Birmingham Health Partners (BHP)

BHP is a strategic alliance between the University of Birmingham and the three major teaching hospitals: Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. Its mission is to harness research strengths in the University and NHS to deliver better treatments and care to our patients.

This year has seen BHP continue to go from strength to strength in delivering translational research, which sees discoveries taken from the laboratory to the clinic to improve patient care and wellbeing. A successful visit from the former Minister for Life Sciences, George Freeman last year, cemented the importance of BHP to the region and helped to put us on the map as a major national player in the life sciences sector.

Find out more at www.birminghamhealthpartners.co.uk

Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM)

BHP also led the creation of the £24 million ITM, a world-class facility which opened last year. Funded by the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with matched funding from BHP and donations from alumni and friends, the ITM aims to use pioneering sciences to accelerate the delivery of personalised health care.



New ITM Director appointed

In June, we were delighted that Professor Subrata Ghosh joined the University as our new Director of the ITM. Subrata offers a wealth of experience in the area of translational immunology of inflammatory bowel disease and novel therapeutic approaches.

Commenting on his new appointment, Professor Ghosh said: 'I feel like I'm joining at a time when Birmingham is close to bringing about major changes in the way clinicians and researchers work together. I am impressed by the great science on the campus, biomedical engineering and IT, and tremendous facilities for conducting fast track clinical trials.'

'The ITM will create a platform where scientists, researchers and clinicians can work together to understand diseases and health and bring about innovations to benefit the patients and communities. I expect the ITM to make Birmingham a tremendous hub of Life Sciences enterprise in the UK and globally.'

Thank you to our ITM donors

'On behalf of the University, I would like to say a huge thank you to all our alumni and friends who have donated more than £1.2 million towards the ITM building', added Professor Ghosh. 'This is a fantastic amount – your support will help accelerate the development of treatments to save and improve lives for many years to come.'

Research collaboration with University of Nottingham

In May, we were proud to announce a groundbreaking research collaboration with the University of Nottingham – the Centre of Membrane Proteins and Receptors (COMPARE). The establishment of the £10 million centre is the result of a year-long competitive process, and marks the fifth anniversary of the strategic partnership between the two universities.

Leading researchers from Birmingham and Nottingham will now work together using some of the world's most advanced imaging technologies to develop more effective drugs with fewer side effects to help treat two of the major killers of mankind, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

For more information about COMPARE visit www.birmingham-nottingham.ac.uk

Battery Park

The first phase of the redevelopment of the former Battery Park site in Selly Oak is now underway, which will include a new state-of-the-art Life Sciences campus. The campus will bring together research facilities and industry to forge strong academic-business collaboration in the region.

Together with a range of shops, bars and restaurants, the scheme will see the creation of 2,700 jobs. We will keep you updated on this project as it develops.

You can find out more about our Life Sciences developments at www.birmingham.ac.uk/life-sciences



Professor Sir Mark Walport, Government Chief Scientific Adviser with Professor Mark Viant, Executive Director of Phenome Centre Birmingham at the opening of the centre.

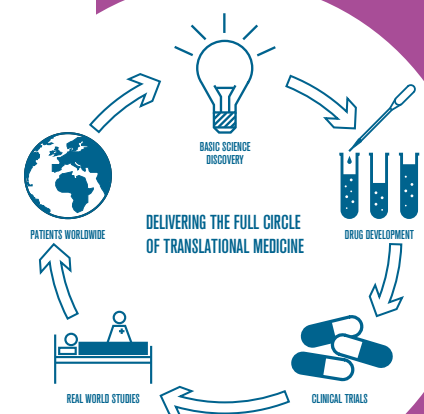
Phenome Centre Birmingham

The new £8 million Phenome Centre Birmingham opened in April.

This large metabolic phenotyping facility is led by internationally-recognised metabolomics and clinical experts at the University of Birmingham, creating a key resource for BHP.

Located in the School of Biosciences, and in the Henry Wellcome Building for Biomolecular Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectroscopy at the University, the centre is a state-of-the-art metabolic phenotyping facility which conducts small-scale and large-scale studies in medical research and stratified medicine. Over the next few years, it will work towards improving healthy ageing and disease diagnosis and treatment to enhance patient outcome.

You can find out more about Phenome Centre Birmingham at www.birmingham.ac.uk/phenome-centre



Alumni profile: Professor Martin Kendall

Many people in the Medical School fondly remember alumnus Professor Martin Kendall OBE MD FRCP FFPM (Hon) (MBChB 1965; MD 1971). A former Consultant, Professor and Associate Dean, Martin still works closely with the University as a trustee and former Chairman of the Arthur Thomson Trust. He's also the Chair of the Sands Cox Charity, which supports medical and dental students.

Here Martin looks back on his time at Birmingham, and on a career lasting over 50 years.

From an early age, Martin was interested in becoming a doctor. 'My parents both studied medicine in Birmingham,' Martin tells us, 'so after considering my options I decided to follow in their footsteps and come here.'

Martin threw himself into his studies. 'I worked hard from the beginning,' he says. 'I'll never forget going to my first anatomy class, where we lined up in groups of six around a body. Four within my group were female so I learned a lot from both the living and the dead!'

Marriage and early career

It was at the Medical School that Martin met his future wife, Rosemary (MBChB 1965), a fellow student. 'We got our final results at 5.00pm on 18 June 1965,' Martin tells us. 'And we were married in Nottingham the next day.'

Martin's first job was in the old General Hospital, before moving on to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). 'The hours were long,' he recalls. 'We worked day and night and were only allowed out for 30 hours once a fortnight.'



Martin receiving his OBE in 2007

Martin's clinical interest in drugs began early in his career. To extend his knowledge, he organised a secondment to work for a pharmaceutical company and persuaded the Medical Research Council to pay for it. This was a unique venture.

Innovation and inspiration

In 1975 Martin was appointed Senior Lecturer in Clinical Pharmacology at Birmingham Medical School and was also made an Honorary Consultant Physician at the former United Birmingham Hospitals.

Martin's teaching included a series of innovative and engaging clinical 'roadshows'. If you were taught by Martin you'll remember them well. Students had to take turns in groups of 8–10 to sit at the front of the lecture theatre, whilst Martin asked each of them what they would do in a real-life situation, for example, if a patient had chest pain. The remaining students listened, learned and joined in. 'For over 30 years, I ran the roadshows which proved to be very effective,' says Martin. 'It taught students to think clinically and respond under pressure.'

Throughout his career, Martin balanced teaching and research with clinical practice. 'For 31 years I spent between 40 and 50 per cent of my time as a consultant doing ward work and outpatient clinics,' Martin says. 'I covered acute medical takes and was responsible for 15 general medical inpatients.'

Quick and Early Diagnosis (QED) Unit

In the late 1980s, Martin had the idea of setting up a QED unit at the QEH. He wanted those suspected of having cancer to be given a diagnosis within two weeks of speaking to their GP.

'At the time, this was a totally new concept,' says Martin. 'The fundraising committee I steered raised £1.5 million to pay for the new unit. It was opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1992. I managed the service from 1992–2000.'

'The QED provided a rapid access, one-stop, computer-based diagnostic service for patients,' adds Martin. 'I'm pleased to say it made a great impact.'

Eight new teaching hospitals

From 2001–2006, Martin served as Associate Dean (NHS Liaison). At the time, the government was significantly increasing the number of medical students in the UK. 'I was responsible for expanding the number of teaching hospitals from eight to 16, so that we could cope with all the new students,' Martin explains. 'As you can imagine, this was a major undertaking.'

'The fundraising committee I steered raised £1.5 million to pay for the new unit. It was opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1992. I managed the service from 1992–2000.'

British National Formulary for Children

After many successful years in the field, Martin became Chairman of the Joint Formulary Committee in 2000. The Committee is responsible for the prestigious British National Formulary (BNF). At the time Martin became Chairman, the BNF was largely dedicated to the treatment of adults with little advice on the treatment of children.

This got Martin thinking. He proposed that there should be a BNF for children too. His idea was met with a number of objections. Some people claimed it would be too expensive. Others said it would take too much work. Undeterred, Martin persevered with his groundbreaking plan. In 2005 the first British National Formulary for Children (BNFC) was published. It's now in its 11th annual edition.

Close alumni links

Martin has always kept close links with other Birmingham alumni, and last year he attended his 50th-year reunion. But his links with former students go way beyond that.

Since the early 1980s, Martin's been closely involved with The Sands Cox Charity. Now the Charity's Chairperson, he's enthusiastic about their work. 'We're keen to work with both alumni and undergraduates,' he tells us, 'and we offer both groups a range of benefits.'

'To give you an example, each year we offer four bursaries to medical students and two bursaries to dental students,' Martin says. 'Students compete for these bursaries, which allow them to undertake four- to six-week elective projects of their choosing.'



Martin with a patient at the QED Unit

Very inspiring

'Along with the funding, students are given the chance to present their projects at the Charity's Annual Scientific Meeting,' he continues. 'The standard of these projects is quite remarkable, and very inspiring. The reports are then published in our annual journal *Aesculapius*.'

Martin lives in Bournville and has been retired for ten years. Now a widower, he is immensely proud of his three sons and seven grandchildren.

Sands Cox Charity

Formed in 1983, the Charity is named after William Sands Cox – one of the founding fathers of Birmingham's Medical School.

'All Birmingham medical and dental graduates and those with close links to the College are welcome to join', says Martin. 'As a member, you'll receive *Aesculapius*, we'll keep you informed about other alumni and the College, and you'll have the opportunity to help raise money and support outstanding students with their elective projects.'

Supporting students

Two students who have recently benefited from the charity are MBChB students Catrin Wigley and Simon Morris.

'I received the Sands Cox bursary to fund my elective project,' says Catrin. 'My project looks at the role of computer navigation within orthopaedic oncology, specifically looking at its application in the resection of sacral bone tumours. It's a collaboration between the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, Birmingham and Hospital Italiano Buenos Aires.'

And Simon explains: 'I've spent my elective in an ENT department in Australia, undertaking a project which is attempting to produce a national



Professor Bob Grieve, Vice President of Sands Cox Charity with Professor Martin Kendall

guideline for day-case tonsillectomy in the public hospitals of Australia. I was awarded £500 by the Charity for my proposal of this project, which has helped fund my trip and make the most of my time down under.'

To find out more about Sands Cox Charity visit www.sandscoxcharity.uk

Business Engagement team: collaborating with industry

Over the last few years, the University has placed an increasing focus on engaging with businesses across the UK and abroad to look at new and innovative ways in which we can collaborate on research projects. To help facilitate this in MDS, we recently set up a new Business Engagement team, which is headed up by Business Engagement Partner, Anne Simper. We talk to Anne to find out more.

'In today's climate, universities are facing reduced funding from research councils and are exploring new ways in which to develop and diversify sources of income,' explains Anne. 'At the same time, many sectors of industry have reduced their in-house research and development capabilities, leaving them without the capability to grow. Collaborations are therefore an excellent way of bridging this gap for

industry while allowing academia to translate research for patient benefit.'

In such a competitive environment, it is increasingly important for academia to demonstrate the benefit of its research base to the economy and society, and business engagement plays a critical role in enabling these partnerships to flourish.

'In recent years, the mind-set around working with industry has evolved and the University is increasingly turning to industry to strengthen its impact,' adds Anne. 'In MDS, collaboration has exploded, with industry awards accounting for 10 per cent of overall research awards within the College. As well as providing a source of income, industry collaboration with multinational pharmaceuticals, diagnostic and biotech companies extends our influence.'



Anne with Professor Janet Lord

The team is currently working on multiple research projects with AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline, Celgene and Novartis, and within the College we have collaborative research projects with more than 60 additional companies.

The team is aided by the fantastic facilities we have that make us really attractive to industry, such as the Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM), as Anne explains, 'The ITM offers us the ability to deliver full-circle translational research which is obviously a real advantage. It also means we are able to bring products to market quicker. A key challenge for companies is getting their products accepted throughout the NHS, and in the ITM we have the Academic Health Science Network who are right at the end of the translational spectrum, focusing on getting products adopted.'

Case study: working with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)

The University has a long-standing, growing relationship with GSK. We are currently involved with lots of projects across the College which focus on several areas of research, including respiratory, inflammation, immunology and cancer. And we're developing new collaborations all the time.

The Business Engagement team recently started working with Chemistry alumnus Mark Bamford (BSc Chemistry 1986; PhD Chemistry 1989), who is now Discovery Partnerships Leader in Europe for GSK.

Mark's team, Discovery Partnerships with Academia (DPAC), is particularly

interested in identifying areas in early drug discovery in which they could partner with academic groups to generate new medicines.

'GSK has drug discovery expertise, whereas academics bring deep insight into the biology and clinical aspects of a disease. Our aim is to work together so we can translate innovative research into medicines that can benefit patients,' explains Mark.

Mark has worked with the Business Engagement team to organise an event in September which will provide an opportunity for our academics to find out more about how they could possibly work with DPAC.

As a former student, Mark is keen to return to campus. 'It's nice to come back and see how the University has evolved and developed so impressively', adds Mark. 'The expertise and capabilities at Birmingham are first rate. I'm very hopeful we can find a project in which we can partner.'

For more information about how you could work with us on research collaborations, contact the Business Engagement team on 0121 414 4056 or email Anne Simper at a.simper@bham.ac.uk or Catherine Wardius at c.a.wardius@bham.ac.uk

Successes for the College of Medical and Dental Sciences and the University of Birmingham

We have had such a successful 12 months. Here are just some of the many highlights:

The University of Birmingham  has risen in the *Complete University Guide* rankings
Voted 15th in 2017, up from 18th in 2016

PAUL MOSS,
PROFESSOR OF HAEMATOLOGY,
HAS BEEN ELECTED TO THE
PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP
OF THE ACADEMY OF
MEDICAL SCIENCES, FOR
HIS OUTSTANDING
CONTRIBUTION
TO MEDICAL
RESEARCH AND
HEALTH CARE

THE 2016 NATIONAL
STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)
HAS AWARDED THE
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
AN OVERALL SATISFACTION
MARK OF

89%

WE ARE CONSISTENTLY
EXCELLING
IN NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL
LEAGUE TABLES AS
BIRMINGHAM IS RANKED

76th
in the world
(QS World University Rankings 2015/16)

We have been ranked in the
TOP 100
UNIVERSITIES
worldwide for Clinical Medicine
by the Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers
for World Universities 2015

DR AMELIA SWIFT,
SENIOR LECTURER
IN THE SCHOOL OF NURSING
WAS AWARDED THE
EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR
AT THE 2016 *STUDENT NURSING TIMES* AWARDS

MR ANDREW BEGGS,
CLINICAL LECTURER IN
GENERAL SURGERY IN
THE INSTITUTE OF CANCER
AND GENOMIC SCIENCES,
HAS BEEN AWARDED
THE YOUNG
COLOPROCTOLOGIST
OF THE YEAR 2016

Our vibrant student-run
medical society, **MedSoc**,
has been voted **best**
medical society 2015
by the United Kingdom Medical Society Association

THE  **TIMES**
THE SUNDAY **TIMES**

GOOD
UNIVERSITY
GUIDE
2016

UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR
FOR GRADUATE
EMPLOYMENT

Alumni news

Honouring Professor Cedric Shackleton

This summer saw Professor Cedric Shackleton awarded an honorary doctorate for his achievements in mass spectrometry, a process used to identify chemicals in a substance by their mass and charge.

Born in Birmingham, Cedric's career spans more than five decades and includes the development of several groundbreaking approaches and techniques that have advanced the field. A senior scientist at the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute in California, Cedric has collaborated with the University of Birmingham for many years, focusing on developing metabolomic approaches to diagnose adrenal cancer and disorders of adrenal steroid synthesis.



Professor Wiebke Arlt, William Withering Chair of Medicine and Director of the Institute of Metabolism and Systems Research commented, 'At Birmingham we have almost unrivalled metabolomics capacity and it is a major strategic goal for us to establish ourselves at the cutting edge of this technological approach. Active input from world leaders in the field such as Professor Shackleton is crucial for propelling us further forward. We look forward to inviting Cedric to come to Birmingham for collaborative scientific talks and teaching sessions that can inspire the students in the Metabolomics Training Centre and our postdoctoral researchers.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Mass spectrometry was invented and implemented by Francis Aston (BSc Applied/ Pure Science 1910; DSc Applied/ Pure Science 1914), one of Birmingham's most outstanding alumni and winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1922 for the discovery of isotopes using mass spectrometry. We are now reinvigorating this prestigious tradition through the creation of the University of Birmingham Metabolomics Core and the new Phenome Centre Birmingham.



possibly in the world, to apply image-intensification to cine-angiocardiology, using pulsed radiation from the outset. He successfully obtained the first cine-angiocardigram in a child in the UK in 1954 using home-made equipment, and later designed a new department which incorporated the first bi-plane cine-angiocardiology apparatus, manufactured and installed to his own specification.

Cine-angiocardograph donated to medical collections

Thank you to alumna Dr Helen Alton (MBChB 1976) who donated a medical first to our collection – an original cine-angiocardograph, which was used to record images of the heart and diagnose conditions in children.

The cine-angiocardograph was developed by Birmingham graduate Dr Roy Astley (MBChB 1944), a pioneer paediatric radiologist. He was the first person in Britain,

Refurbished Med School Café

Francis Aston is one of several alumni celebrated on the walls of our newly refurbished Med School Café. Be sure to visit for a coffee or a bite to eat sometime!



Birmingham Medical School Class of 1980 reunion: much has changed but some things just stay the same!

Alumnus Dr Steven Walker (MBChB 1980), Director of St Giles Medical in London, sent in a lovely letter and photos with tales of his 35th reunion event last year...



Around 80 of us from the Class of 1980 and guests made it to Birmingham for the 35th anniversary over the weekend of 2-4 October 2015. Our venue was the old Eye Hospital, now turned into the rather posh Hotel du Vin. Many of us remember training there. Our bedroom had been an old operating theatre.

The first event was a beer and curry night. It soon became evident that while some of us had got fatter and lost hair, our love of real ale and a late night feed had not diminished! One problem was trying to recognise everyone, though voices and mannerisms soon made the intervening years disappear and caused old stories to be retold.

The Saturday started with a bit of education. A surprisingly large group signed up for a guided tour of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the Birmingham Art Gallery. What splendid colours. Perhaps some of us have gained a veneer of culture over the years?

The afternoon was devoted to a tour of the medical school, University campus and Barber Institute. Much had changed. The entrance to the medical school was bright and cheerful and the library and old pathology museum had all but disappeared. Our year consisted of around 140, now there are close to 400 students. We were treated to tea hosted by Professor Jamie Coleman who looks after the undergraduates, plus some current students. What bright and mature young people. The School seems in safe hands.

The highlight of the weekend was our dinner back in the hotel. The evening started with a jazz, champagne and canape reception before moving into the Krug Room for a formal dinner. There were speeches, jokes and nostalgia a plenty! Most of us went to bed rather merry.

The weekend was not over. Our final event, a Birmingham medics tradition, was a canal boat trip to Selly Oak with a fish and chip lunch. The sun came out, more beer was drunk and we all went home happy.

Can we do this all again in five years? God willing we can, that is, if we can still remember our names and which country Birmingham is in!



Dr Steven Walker with partner, Dr Christine Oesterling

Alumni evening in Nigeria

Alumni joined Public Health academic Paul Fisher for dinner as part of his visit to Lagos, Nigeria in April. Alumni also supported Paul in talking to prospective students at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital.



l-r: Paul Fisher, alumna Dr Afolake Adebayo, John Ojeogwu, Country Officer for Nigeria and alumnus Dr Opeyemi Odelede.

We'd love to hear about any reunions you are planning. Please keep in touch at mds-alumni@contacts.bham.ac.uk
Find out about our upcoming events at www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events

Widening access to medicine

The College is passionate about helping bright, motivated but less advantaged youngsters to access healthcare degree courses and progress to rewarding professional careers. We achieve this through our long established commitment to Widening Access to Medicine.

'Traditionally, Medicine has a high intake from independent schools and the middle classes, however we now recognise that we need doctors who represent our society,' explains Programme Director of Medicine, Professor Kate Thomas. 'There needs to be diversity in terms of socio-economic background and ethnicity, so patients are able to see someone who understands their life, cultural and religious obligations, as well as being a doctor. That's why the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme was introduced.'

Shayan is a Birmingham Hero

One A2B graduate who is a shining example of the success of the scheme is Dr Shayan Ahmed (MBChB 2014), who features alongside Professor Kate Thomas, Dr Rima Dhillon and Dr Joe Alderman in a recent Birmingham Heroes campaign. Shayan was inspired to study medicine at Birmingham when he attended our Academic Enrichment Programme organised by the Outreach Office ten years ago.



A2B Scheme

Our A2B Scheme supports Year 13 students from families across the West Midlands, who have little or no experience of higher education, to gain a place at the University. It offers students the opportunity to visit campus, take part in an academic study skills module and complete a supervised assignment in a subject relevant to their chosen degree. If participants pass the module of work, they can access degree courses with slightly lower grades. Those who achieve the standard entry grades are awarded an A2B Scholarship, which helps to fund their studies.

Since the scheme started in 2000, more than 2,300 students have entered the University across all subject areas and 720 students have been awarded the scholarship. In Medicine alone, 63 have been awarded the A2B scholarship.



Liam's story

Liam Barrett, 22, from Stechford, accessed the Medicine degree course through the A2B scheme. Husband and wife alumni Dr David Derbyshire (MBChB 1975) and Dr Jacqueline Scrimshire (MBChB 1985) support Liam.

As the first generation of his family to go to university, Liam is grateful for the opportunity that the scheme gave him. 'The extra help I received through A2B was invaluable,' says Liam.

Currently taking a year out to gain a BSc in Urgent and Emergency Care, Liam says he has never felt at a disadvantage. 'I felt I was on a level playing from the start. It's hard work, but I now have a lot more confidence in my abilities. I've proved that you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it.'

'We are very grateful to our alumni and friends who have supported our A2B students over the years,' adds Kate. 'Please get in touch if you are interested in finding out more.'

We welcome all donations towards A2B Scholarships. A gift of £1,500 would fully support an A2B scholar for one year. Find out more at www.birmingham.ac.uk/a2b

Interested in furthering your studies? We'd love to have you back

Do you remember how much you enjoyed your time here? Why don't you come back and improve your career opportunities with Masters-level study, top up your skills and knowledge with one of our CPD modules or carry out some key research?

We are proud to say that, every year, many of our graduates return to the University to carry out a postgraduate degree. Here are just some of our many postgraduate alumni talking about their experience at Birmingham...

Alexandra De Prendergast, MRes Cardiovascular Science

After graduating from BSc Human Biology with a year in Computer

Science at Birmingham, Alexandra applied for the MRes Cardiovascular Science. 'Having done a predominantly academic undergraduate degree, I wanted to get a different perspective on science in higher education and gain some practical experience,' explains Alexandra.

'Doing a research Masters was a perfect way of putting myself in the role of a researcher, while still receiving teaching to guide the development of my project.'

Dr Beckie Port, PhD Cancer Sciences

Beckie completed her PhD in Cancer Sciences in 2013 and now works as a Senior Research Communications Officer for Parkinson's UK.

'What I learnt during my PhD has transferred to the office and my daily work', says Beckie. 'My time at Birmingham opened my eyes to new career paths and experiences, and has prepared me for a job that I really enjoy.'

You can read more and put your questions to Alexandra, Beckie and Mark, along with other postgraduate alumni at www.pg.bham.ac.uk/mentors

For more information about postgraduate study visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/mds-postgraduate



Dr Mark Garvey, MSc Medical Microbiology and Immunology and PhD Immunity and Infection

Mark attended the University of Birmingham for his undergraduate, Masters and PhD degrees. He later returned to Birmingham for his current role as Principal Clinical Scientist at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

'I took up postgraduate study in order to identify whether or not I wanted to pursue an academic career. It also opened up many future career options for me.'



DID YOU KNOW?

- Our research influences national and international policy
- The College has received more than £100 million in capital investment since 2006, improving both teaching and research facilities
- We currently offer 25 postgraduate taught and over 40 postgraduate research opportunities

Distinguished Alumni Scholarship

Every year, we offer awards of £2,000 per scholarship to 50 alumni wishing to undertake Masters study at Birmingham.

One of last year's winners was Andrew Nicholson, who received the scholarship to help him access the MSc Trauma Science programme. Andrew says, 'Being awarded a scholarship meant much more to me than a financial contribution towards my Masters degree.'

For more information, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumnischolarship

FIND OUT MORE

When it comes to postgraduate study we could be exactly what you're looking for. For more information email: pgt-marketing@contacts.bham.ac.uk. For updates about our research, news and events please follow us on Twitter @unibirm_MDS, like us on Facebook/collegemds or visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/mds-alumni



Staff profile: Professor Peter Brocklehurst

By the time you read this, Professor Peter Brocklehurst will be the new Director of the Birmingham Clinical Trials Unit (BCTU), one of the leading CTUs in Europe. We spoke to Peter just before he took up his post, and heard all about his exciting plans for the future.

'One of the things I'm looking forward to most at Birmingham is getting back to the research,' Peter told us. 'It's something I've always been passionate about. My last job was a senior management role which was interesting and challenging, and taught me a lot. I worked with a huge number of people, and covered many areas of research. But because of the nature of the role, it took me away from the research itself.'

Great mix of people

'The BCTU is one of the biggest of its kind, with more than 50 trials running at present,' Peter said. 'So I'll be spending lots of time with potential chief investigators. I'll help them get their ideas worked up properly for funding applications.'

'And of course I'll be in charge of managing current trials, and making sure that they run smoothly,' he continued. 'This will involve a range of duties. For example I'll be responsible for governance, staff and legal and regulatory compliance.'

'The BCTU works with academics from the University of Birmingham, academics from elsewhere, and also professionals from the NHS, which means I'll be working with a great mix of people.'

Fantastic team at Birmingham

'I'm in a very fortunate position,' Peter added. 'The unit is already highly successful, and has a fantastic team. I'm looking forward to help develop the unit even further, and to introducing even more innovative ideas and novel methodology.'

Building on its strengths

'I want to build on the University's clear clinical strengths,' Peter said. 'I'd like the BCTU to link with other areas of the University – the new Dental School, for example. There will be potential links I don't know about yet.'

'I'm keen to know if these areas are ready for trials yet or not. And if they're not thinking about trials, is this something I can help them with?'

Focus on primary care

'I'm pleased that the primary care trials team has moved into the BCTU,' Peter said. 'Many clinical trials in the UK are around treating patients in hospital, but most patients don't get their care there. Building up the unit's primary care portfolio is a key aim of mine.'

Real potential

'Put simply, the BCTU does anything that isn't cancer,' Peter explained. 'The Cancer Research UK Clinical Trials Unit (CRCTU) at Birmingham is successful, well established and highly regarded. Professor Pam Kearns is the CRCTU's Director, and she's also a key figure at Birmingham's world-class Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM).'

'I'm interested in working with Pam and the team at the ITM,' Peter said. 'I'll be working closely with Pam to remove any



structural barriers to success. Together, we can deliver a joined-up pipeline and quality process that runs from the earliest phase trials through to actual clinical practice. There's real potential to link with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies too.'

Peter's background

Peter studied Medicine at Dundee University, graduating in 1985. After postgraduate training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Peter was admitted to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1991. He was awarded an MSc in Epidemiology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 1994. He then joined the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit as a research fellow. During 17 years at Oxford University, Peter became a consultant clinical epidemiologist and later the Director. Peter then moved to UCL, before accepting his new position at Birmingham this year.

He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health. In 2011, Peter led a groundbreaking and still highly influential observational study on home-birth. 'Our study involved nearly 80,000 women,' Peter said, 'and I'm immensely proud of what we achieved as a team.'

You can read more about the BCTU at www.birmingham.ac.uk/bctu

Leaving a lasting legacy

The University of Birmingham is fortunate to have benefitted from many gifts in wills throughout its history, thanks to the generosity of our alumni and friends.

We are immensely grateful that almost £2 million has been gifted by alumni from the College of Medical and Dental Sciences. The largest legacy received to date was for £1.8 million in 2013 from Dr Leslie Topham (MBChB 1943). Here, we look back at Leslie's fascinating life.

Dr Leslie Topham

Dr Leslie Topham was born in Stoke-on-Trent on 28 January 1914. We know very little about Leslie's early life, other than the fact that he loved his time at the University of Birmingham, graduating from medicine in 1944.

Following his graduation, Leslie worked as a Medical Registrar at Salisbury General Infirmary and then entered general practice in Stoke-on-Trent in 1947. He gained his MRCP in 1949 and in 1951 he married Marjorie, known to everyone as Dolly.

Working abroad

Leslie's medical career took him and his wife across the world.

He spent his early married years as Medical Officer in Nigeria and Medical Superintendent at Barcardine Hospital in central Queensland. In 1956, the Tophams returned to the UK where Leslie took up the study of ophthalmology at Birmingham Eye Hospital and obtained DO in 1957.

Leslie and Dolly spent the next 35 years living abroad again, which saw Leslie working as an ophthalmic surgeon in Papua New Guinea and then returning to Australia where he was appointed Consultant Ophthalmologist at

Townsville General Hospital in North Queensland and set up his own private practice.

Staff at the hospital remember Leslie fondly as 'a dapper gentleman who always wore a bow tie – even under his theatre garb.' Returning to the UK in the early 1990s, the Tophams settled in Dunnington, near York, where Leslie continued to consult in surrounding areas until his death in 1995.

Leaving a legacy

Having no surviving family, the Tophams had agreed that upon their deaths, they would leave their £1.8 million estate to the University of Birmingham to set up the 'Dr Leslie James Topham Fund'. The fund would be used to further teaching and clinical medicine within the Medical School, support medical students and fund travelling fellowships for academics. This legacy was realised when Dolly died in 2013.

Due to the size of their gift, Leslie and Dolly were inducted posthumously into the Chancellor's Guild of Benefactors and have had their names inscribed in marble outside the Great Hall.

Head of College, Professor David Adams commented: 'We are enormously grateful to the Tophams for leaving such a generous legacy, which will help support our academics and students for many years to come.'

'For me, pledging a legacy was about finding a way to recognise and be grateful for the opportunities I was given while at University, to follow my hopes and dreams.'

DR SALLY BENNETT (MBChB 1979)



Dr Leslie Topham



The Topham's names outside the Great Hall

What will your legacy be?

If you remember your time at Birmingham fondly, please consider remembering us with a gift in your will. Gifts of all sizes make a huge difference to the University and our students – even a small percentage of your assets can have a transformative impact.

There are lots of ways in which you can direct your legacy, from providing financial assistance to students to funding medical research or improving our facilities.

For more information contact the Legacy Officer on 0121 414 7957, email legacies@contacts.bham.ac.uk or visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/legacies

GET INVOLVED

As a Birmingham graduate, we want to hear from you!

There are lots of ways you can re-connect and get involved at the University of Birmingham:

Guest lectures

We are very keen to invite our alumni to come back and deliver a guest lecture to our students on their specialist area or to showcase their career.

Volunteering

We are always looking for volunteers to help out at open days, give careers advice to students or take part in promotional campaigns. We are grateful for any spare time you can offer.

Alumni profile

By featuring in an alumni profile, not only does it help to promote our courses to potential students and showcase the different careers they can lead to, it also provides a great opportunity to promote you and your work.

Mentoring

Why not mentor a student? As an alumnus, you have a wealth of knowledge and expertise that you could pass on to one of our students. Mentoring doesn't take up much time and can be extremely rewarding for both you and our students. Find out more at www.birmingham.ac.uk/careersmentoring

Reunions

Planning to meet up with your old University friends? Please tell us and we can help promote your event and organise any tours. Every autumn we host a special 30th anniversary event for our medicine and dental alumni so make sure we have the correct contact details for you.

Give back

Donations to the University can really change lives. Your support for our research projects will help address society's biggest challenges. To find out more and donate, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving



Keep in touch

If you are interested in finding out more about any of these opportunities, or simply want to share your news or update your contact details, there are lots of ways to get in touch:



mds-alumni@contacts.bham.ac.uk



@unibirm_MDS / @birminghamalum



The University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends



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