

# OLDJOE

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM'S  
ALUMNI AND FRIENDS MAGAZINE

Autumn 2015



POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX



The time lords

Giving birth to hope

Creativity close up

# The first word

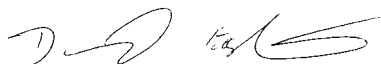
This special edition of *Old Joe* magazine celebrates something truly extraordinary; the University's pioneering Circles of Influence fundraising campaign raising an astounding £193,426,877.47 million. Circles of Influence substantially exceeded its £160 million target to become the largest charitable campaign outside Oxford, London, and Cambridge, and this was only possible through the kindness and generosity of our donors and volunteers.

From completing the Aston Webb semi-circle with the Bramall Music Building to funding life-saving cancer research, the campaign has left a wonderful legacy to the University and the impact of donors' gifts will be felt for years to come. From our very conception as England's first civic university more than a century ago, Birmingham has been founded through philanthropy and our donors' generosity is keeping that vision strong.

Inside this magazine, you can read how our extraordinary campaign has changed thousands of people's lives, and learn more about some of the exciting new areas addressing society's biggest challenges where our fundraising will now focus, from saving mothers' lives in Africa to innovative new cancer treatments.

We have shown, through Circles of Influence, the impact our community of donors and volunteers can make when they give generously, and I would like to encourage you to join them. There has never been a better time to support your University.

Best wishes,



**Professor Sir David Eastwood**  
Vice-Chancellor and donor to the University



## What's on the cover?

● **Image:** This edition of *Old Joe* has been produced with two different covers. Yours features Philosophy researchers Dr Nik Effingham and Dr Al Wilson, who are investigating the probability of time travel, posing with the *Doctor Who* Tardis at BBC Birmingham. Read about their research on pages 46-47.

Donors and volunteers to our Circles of Influence fundraising campaign have received a special commemorative edition with a cover image featuring three of more than 250 extraordinary projects they supported. Find out more about what the campaign achieved and the University's vision for future fundraising on pages 8-11.



## GUEST EDITOR

Each year Birmingham has many reasons to celebrate, and this year has been no different. The Circles of Influence campaign has officially raised £193.4 million, funding extraordinary projects on campus, locally and globally (page 8).

I am honoured to represent the University by graduating as its symbolic 300,000th alumna (page 36). Being part of this momentous occasion has been a fantastic way to end my three years as an undergraduate. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here.

During my final year I was treasurer of the Women in Finance society, so it was inspiring to read alumna Billie Major's career path (page 31). Having volunteered for a range of causes, I also enjoyed 'A Wheely Good Cause' (page 30) and would encourage you all to get involved.

Birmingham is renowned for its world-class research, and learning about the transplant revolution (page 48) and new diagnostic equipment for diseases (page 39) was an exciting glimpse at the very near future.

Whether this is your first time reading *Old Joe* or you're a regular, I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I did.

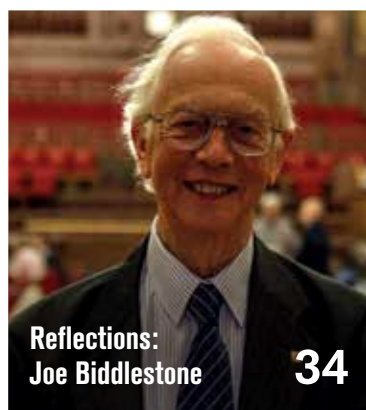
**Shenaid Tapper (BSc Planning and Economics, 2015) RBS Graduate Scheme**

## Be a guest editor

Let us know if you would like to be a guest editor via [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

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## STOP Press

The University of Birmingham has won University of the Year for Graduate Employment in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times Good University Guide* 2016.



# YOUR YEAR IN PICTURES





4



6



5



**1. SINGING SOLICITOR:** Criminal defence lawyer Laurie Neale (LLB Law, 1978) and his three sons create a sensation when The Neales reach the final of the television talent contest *Britain's Got Talent*.

**2. ROUND OF APPLAUSE:** Alumna Joanne Lowe (Occ PG Enabling Others, 2013), pictured left, is named Adult Social Worker of the Year at the 2014 'Social Worker of the Year Awards'. A social worker in Birmingham for 15 years, she has worked across a variety of areas including dementia care, mental health and learning disabilities.

**3. PUT A BOW ON IT:** The University's iconic clock tower Old Joe looks even smarter than usual adorned with a six metre long red bow to celebrate the generosity of donors. The tallest freestanding clock tower in the world was built thanks to philanthropic gifts in 1905 and more than 100 years later the Circles of Influence campaign raised £193.4 million.

**4. WHAT A HOOT:** Heads are turned on campus as the University joins in with the Big Hoot, Birmingham's largest public art event. Two giant owls became part of a trail across the city, highlighting the talent and creativity of regional artists, schools and community groups.

**5. ENTER THE DRAGON:** Prospective entrepreneurs with big ideas will have to win over Nick Jenkins (BA Russian Language and Literature, 1990) in the latest series of the BBC's *Dragons' Den*.

**6. TOP OF THE POPS:** Donations from alumni enable the launch of a student-run record label New Street Records. The label aims to sign and promote an array of musical acts in the city, focusing on student talent as a priority.

# B15 FACES



## What do you miss most about the University of Birmingham?

*Old Joe* hears from 15 alumni on what they remember with particular fondness about their alma mater.



**Marcella Meehan**  
(BA Modern Languages, 2015)  
*'...all my language "chicas".'*



**Lauren Carradice**  
(LLB Law with French, 2014)  
*'...the sense of community I felt whilst studying there.'*



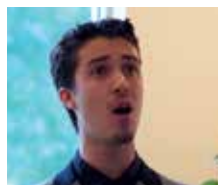
**Sam Bennett**  
(Inter BMedSc Public Health and Population Sciences, 2015)  
*'...my great education!'*



**Isabella Seeger**  
(MA Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language, 2011)  
*'...the truly supportive atmosphere from staff.'*



**Chez Stainer**  
(BA English, 2015)  
*'...the Guild (between 12am and 4am).'*



**Leighton H. Triplow**  
(Occ UG Music (Occasional), 2013)  
*'...the world-class music facilities that assisted my development as a classical singer.'*



**Daniel McLeod**  
(BA French Studies and History, 2015)  
*'...living in the glorious Selly Oak with friends.'*



**Rachel Preece** (BA French Studies and German Studies, 2008)  
*'...tuna sandwiches and Wotsits from Selly Oak Tesco Express after a night out.'*



**Safiyyah Gareeb**  
(BA English Literature and Philosophy, 2015)  
*'...the walk up through the Bramall arch.'*



**Simon Washbrook**  
(PGCE Education, 2004)  
*'...the cash machine that dispensed £5 notes – every student's best friend!'*



**Sereena Gill**  
(BA History and Political Science, 2015)  
*'...nights at Fab!'*



**Jaclyn Hill** (MSc Applied Meteorology and Climatology, 2013)  
*'...seeing Old Joe's face every day.'*



**Adam Elgey**  
(BSc Biological Sciences, 2015)  
*'...Dodgeball!'*



**Susana Reyes** (PGCE Education, 2010)  
*'...having the time to immerse myself in the world of books.'*



**Olivia Scott**  
(BA History, 2015)  
*'...making bad decisions!'*

## #oldjoeoldfriends

Birmingham is a place where you make friends for life. We asked students to send us images of themselves with their new mates during Welcome Week using #oldjoenewfriends. Now we'd like

you to join in – tweet pictures of you and your University friends with #oldjoeoldfriends to @birminghamalum or send your stories to [alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk), and we'll print the best in the next issue.



# CHIRPY DRAGON

## COMBATS OBESITY



Childhood obesity has increased dramatically in China over the past 30 years, with a quarter of under-18s estimated to be overweight or obese (one in three in major cities). Public health researcher Dr Bai Li is intervening to solve this health crisis.



The CHIRPY DRAGON (CHinese pRimary school children PhYsical activity and DietaRy behAviour chanGe InterventiON)

research programme helps educate pupils, family members, teachers and school cooks through fun, hands-on sessions. After developing the programme while studying for her PhD

at Birmingham, post-doctoral researcher Bai (MSc Marketing, 2007; PhD Health and Population Sciences, 2013) is delighted to make it a reality, with more than 61,000 children at 43 primary schools in Guangdong province now involved.

'It would have been a pity on my graduation day if I hadn't been able to put this research into practice, as we need to test its feasibility and effectiveness in real settings. We have an outstanding team running this project in a place I know and love and hopefully we can make a real impact at a policy level in China,' she says.

In a first for the University of Birmingham, the research is funded by a donation from China. The programme has been made possible thanks to a £500,000 (nearly ¥5 million) donation from Zhejiang Yong Ning Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. It marks one of the first instances of a Chinese business funding a UK-led research project, with academic knowledge and support in the UK reinforced by locally recruited health promotion officers.

The research does not look at the genetics of

obesity, but at behaviour, environment, understanding, beliefs, and attitudes. Many of the activities target main carers, in China often grandparents, who are invited to attend workshops offering practical child feeding tips and promoting physical activities. Family quizzes aim to dispel commonly held misconceptions that overweight children cannot develop diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, and Bai is adapting the example of UK television chef Jamie Oliver by working with school cooks to improve the nutrition of menus.

'The beauty of CHIRPY DRAGON is that we worked with local people to understand their needs. We spent five years understanding what Chinese children and their parents require. If this project is successful, I hope it could be a model for transfers to other parts of China or developing countries,' Bai says.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2009, donors funded an obesity research programme at the University, including a children's exercise study using dance mats. Find out more at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/obesity](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/obesity)





# FROM PIONEERING CAMPAIGN TO FUTURE FUNDRAISING



We're honoured to announce the official closing of the University's Circles of Influence fundraising campaign in this edition of *Old Joe*. A huge thank you to the 11,000 donors who raised £193.4 million, smashing the £160 million target.

Below, you can find out more about some of the extraordinary projects that our donors have funded, and learn about some of the exciting new areas you can support as the tradition of charitable giving which founded the University 100 years ago continues.

Go to page 26 to learn more about the impact of Circles of Influence and see pictures of our Community Day celebrations.

## SUPPORTED:

### Hydrogen

Robert Steinberger-Wilckens was appointed as Professor in Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Engineering thanks to donations to our Circles of Influence fundraising campaign.

'Charitable giving has helped the University build an international presence in this exciting field. Thanks to donors' support we are part of a consortium developing hydrogen vehicles for regional and municipal transport and have been awarded £5.5 million to create and run a Doctoral Training Centre in Hydrogen, Fuel Cells and their Applications, the first of its kind in the UK.'



## FUNDRAISING FOR:

### Collaborative Teaching Laboratory

The hydrogen engineers of the future will be honing their skills in the Collaborative Teaching Laboratory (CTL), an exciting new facility opening for the 2017/18 academic year bringing together teaching activities across a broad range of science and engineering disciplines. The CTL will be a state-of-the-art hub that brings all Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects at Birmingham under one roof and promotes partnerships between them. It will aim to revolutionise teaching and learning, drive innovation and engage and inspire careers in STEM.





GUEST ED LOVES

## SUPPORTED:

## Institute of Translational Medicine

A groundbreaking new medical research facility opens in the former Queen Elizabeth Hospital this autumn. Dr Tom Clutton-Brock, Interim Director of the Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM), explains how your support has made a difference.

'Translational medicine bridges the gap between taking original research to patients' bedsides. Medicines, devices and diagnostics as well as health care delivery and education will all be possible within the building, which will capitalise on many of Birmingham's unique strengths. Donations like yours will help the ITM to save, improve, and extend the lives of many people for years to come.'



## FUNDRAISING FOR:

## Global infection research

Antibiotic resistance and the control of infectious diseases such as TB are global issues. Scientists at the University are carrying out pioneering research to understand diseases and the spread of antibiotic resistance, identify new strains of disease, and facilitate the development of new antibiotics.

By supporting this work you will help address an issue deemed a major global threat by the World Health Organisation.



## SUPPORTED:

## University of Birmingham School

The first pupils have been welcomed to the University of Birmingham School, which opened in September 2015. Support from donors allowed the building to include bigger classrooms, wider corridors, state-of-the-art IT equipment, and specialist facilities for teacher education.

Principal Mike Roden says: 'We've created a school that the city of Birmingham can be proud of and donors' support has helped us make certain that we provide the best learning environment possible for our pupils. I can't thank them enough.'



## FUNDRAISING FOR:

## Student support

Our donors have funded 570 student scholarships through the Circles of Influence campaign. However, more and more bright young people from under-represented backgrounds apply each year, and we hope the University School will increase this further. Your donations will help us continue sector leading initiatives such as Access to Birmingham (A2B) Scholarships.



## SUPPORTED:



## Prostate cancer

A prostate cancer trial led by Mr Richard Viney (MBCB Medicine, 1995), Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham and Consultant Urological Surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, gave 20 men with advanced prostate cancer the possibility of extending their life for six months.

Mr Viney says: 'Thanks to the kindness and generosity of donors my research project, trialling a cutting-edge new combination treatment for prostate cancer, began up to two years earlier than it otherwise might have.'



## FUNDRAISING FOR:

## Alternative cancer treatments

'This could be a real step-change in cancer treatment,' according to Professor Ben Willcox, of the Cancer Immunology and Immunotherapy Centre, whose team is researching the immune system's response to cancer. They are developing treatments to stop tumours 'switching off' immune responses to the cancer, so a patient's own immune system can fight the cancer cells. This produces significantly fewer side effects than chemotherapy but can be just as effective. The team has seen transformational results in treating solid cancers that lung cancer specialist Professor Gary Middleton says: 'made the hairs on the backs of our necks stand up.' Your support could fund more specialist scientists and help Birmingham establish a world-leading institute for this exciting work.



## SUPPORTED:

## Music

Completing the red brick Aston Webb semi-circle, the Bramall Music Building includes a 450-seat auditorium plus rehearsal and teaching space for our world-leading Music Department. Head of Music Dr Paul Rodmell says:

'To say that the Bramall Music Building has had a positive impact on our students would be an understatement, and it's all thanks to our supporters. The Music Department underwent a colossal transformation when it moved into the building in 2012 and has been enjoying its excellent facilities ever since.'



## FUNDRAISING FOR:



## Shakespeare Institute

Based in historic Stratford-upon-Avon, the Shakespeare Institute was founded in 1951 and has become a globally important research centre. Your support will help further the centre's world-leading position and provide funding to support academic endeavour and enable new discoveries.



## SUPPORTED:

## Brain cancer in children

Brain cancer is the most common cause of death from cancer in childhood.

Thanks to our supporters, a team led by Professor Andrew Peet have improved scanning methods to diagnose and treat children with the disease.

'This research has helped us personalise treatment for each child, which is so important in making their outcome the best that it possibly can be,' he says. 'The very close partnership between the University and Birmingham Children's Hospital has really helped translate this research from basic ideas into techniques which can be used on our patients.'



## FUNDRAISING FOR:

## Birmingham Children's Hospital Partnership

Again working in partnership with Birmingham Children's Hospital, Dr Frank Mussai's team is developing new treatments for children with cancer. His research investigates the links between childhood cancers and the immune system, and focuses on both blood cancers, such as acute myeloid leukaemia, and solid cancers like neuroblastoma (two of the most common and hardest to treat childhood cancers). Results from recent laboratory studies are currently being developed into new forms of therapy and will soon enter clinical trials. Funding for research into childhood cancers lags behind adult cancer studies. Donations will be used in direct support of the research, including purchasing essential equipment, funding scientists to perform the work and running the laboratory trials.



## HOW CAN I HELP?

If you are interested in supporting any of our new fundraising projects, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/giving](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/giving), or complete the donation form enclosed with this edition.

Tweet,  
like,  
share

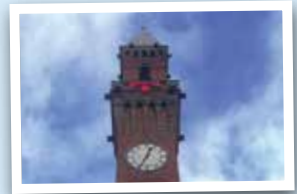


Alumni across the world have been connecting with the University, and each other, through social media.

## #UoBpartofit

@birminghamalum celebrated the success of the Circles of Influence fundraising campaign with a 100-day countdown sharing some of the amazing things donors helped achieve ahead of the campaign's close on 31 July.

Find out more about Circles of Influence on page 26.



@oldjoeclock was built via #philanthropy - something we celebrated with #oldjoebow



How @unibirmingham looked in 1930. Green heart to be restored in new developments



Since 2009 you've helped support 570 student scholarships @unibirmingham

# OLD JOE NEWS

## Love is in the air

*Old Joe* has shared many happy stories of alumni who met their partner on campus but the romance of Daniel and Sarah Collins (née Hardiman) could have come straight from a Hollywood hit.

Despite studying the same BSc Geography and Environmental Sciences course and sharing many of the same friends the couple never met during their time at university, not even when they graduated in the same ceremony in July 2005. However fate had a different plan for the pair and finally brought them together in a chance meeting at the Guild of Students a year after graduation.

'We must have walked past each other thousands of times or even sat next to each other in lectures, and yet we never



Image credit - [www.katiemitchellphotography.com](http://www.katiemitchellphotography.com)

met,' remembers Daniel. 'Luck brought us together when we separately returned to Birmingham to visit friends who were still studying, and we've been inseparable ever since.' The couple have built a life together in Australia where they have met many fellow Birmingham graduates yet had nothing to commemorate their shared time on campus. 'Sarah's graduation photos were lost,' explains Daniel, 'and the ones my sister took for me are unfortunately completely blurred.'

*Old Joe* rose to the challenge and tracked down a copy of the couple's Class of 2005 graduation photo, which Daniel presented to Sarah as a surprise on their wedding day this July. 'This was a perfect wedding gift from the University,' says Daniel. 'It's an ideal reminder of how happy we both were at Birmingham and how lucky we are to have found each other when we could have so easily missed our chance.'

Do you have a University of Birmingham love story? Send your memories and photos to [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) or tweet [@birminghamalum](https://twitter.com/birminghamalum)

## All that glitters...

Unlocking the secrets of a treasure trove of sparkling Anglo-Saxon objects is the focus of one of the UK's largest research projects.

The Staffordshire Hoard is the biggest collection of seventh century gold and silver objects ever discovered and the final phase of an academic quest to explore it is now underway.

University of Birmingham researchers are working with Birmingham Museums Trust to understand the art, symbolism and craftsmanship of each item, and reflect on the hoard within the context of seventh-century Europe.

Thanks to the partnership, conservators have been able to use specialist on-campus equipment to

examine different sections and identify organic materials used to construct the objects. 'Being able to use the University's resources and expertise is a great advantage to the project,' says Conservation Coordinator Pieta Greaves. 'This work will bring us a little closer to understanding these dark ages of history.'

Ian Jones, Professor of Physical Metallurgy, said working with Birmingham Museums Trust was an excellent opportunity for the School of Metallurgy and Materials to engage with the local community.

The project is funded by Historic England and

the hoard's owners, Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils, and the research partnership has been jointly sponsored by the University and Birmingham Museums Trust.

For further information visit [www.staffordshirehoard.com](http://www.staffordshirehoard.com).





GUEST ED LOVES

# STUDIES *BEFORE* SPACE

PhD student Maggie Lieu, who made global headlines when she was shortlisted to become one of the first human visitors to Mars, has pulled out of the mission.

Maggie, who was selected as one of the final 100 applicants for the Mars One programme, has decided to put her studies first but she is still determined to become an astronaut and visit the Red Planet.

'Mars is so close. It is right around the corner. Why haven't we been there yet?' she asks.

Currently in the third year of a PhD in Extragalactic Astrophysics at the University, Maggie now hopes to apply to become a European Space Agency astronaut.

She does not regret making the shortlist for the Mars One mission or the media attention over her aspirations to become the first Martian mother.

'I see the attention as positive as I've had so much interest from schoolchildren in science, particularly young women who also hope to become astronauts,' she says.

 Follow Maggie  
on Twitter  
[@Space\\_Mog](https://twitter.com/Space_Mog)

*Picture location kindly  
provided by BiSON -  
the Birmingham Solar  
Oscillations Network*

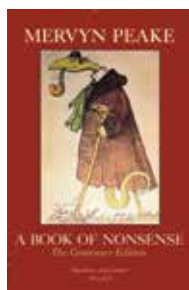






## MY FAVOURITE BOOKS

Dr Benjamin Zephaniah (DLitt, 2008) is a poet, novelist, playwright, musician, television and radio presenter. He stars in the BBC series *Peaky Blinders* and his latest book *Terror Kid* is out now.



**Book of Nonsense**  
Mervyn Peake  
Growing up as an angry young black man in Birmingham I thought nonsense poems about animals

living in jars wouldn't be for me but a friend recommended this book and I loved its playfulness. It made me realise that not all poems have to make sense and it recaptured my love of rhyme.



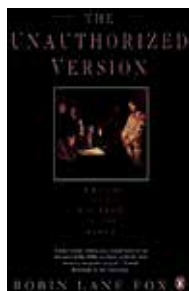
**Red Shelley**  
Paul Foot  
When I first started writing I didn't want to be called a poet. My work was about being black in Britain, and in my mind 'poets'

were dead white men. Discovering this book made me realise that Shelley was a revolutionary, and sexy! Foot shows how Shelley has been cleaned up by critics. This book inspired my tour *Zephaniah on Shelley* and shows that not all poets of the past were establishment figures.



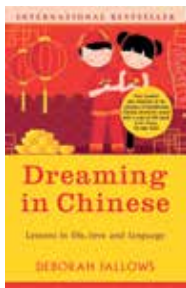
**The People Speak**  
Colin Firth and Anthony Arnone  
This is based on *The People Speak* event where people performed inspirational

speeches from throughout history and I read *Mask of Anarchy* by Shelley. Firth and Arnone found they had so much material that it became a book, and I'm proud to say that my poetry is included. The great thing about this book is that it has famous voices alongside people you will never have heard of and combines the history of all of us not just the establishment.



**The Unauthorised Version**  
Robin Lane Fox  
My full name, Benjamin Obadiah Iqbal Zephaniah, is Muslim, Jewish, and Christian

and I have always been interested in religion and why people are religious. This book is about the Bible, who wrote it; and how it is comprised of many books edited over time. It teaches the reader to be open minded and to make their own decision about religion.



**Dreaming in Chinese**  
Deborah Fallows  
This book isn't about learning a language but understanding a philosophy. Fallows explains how some things

that may seem strange or rude in a new language are actually part of a nation's culture. I lived in China for six years and think people should take this approach when learning any new language.



For your chance to win these five books, answer the following question:

**What is the full name of the lead character in *Terror Kid*?**

Email your answer and alumni number (on the update form with this *Old Joe*) by 31 December 2015 to [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

## WARMING UP TO TECHNOLOGY

Research to improve the efficient use of heat in the home and workplace will be developed after the University was awarded major government funding.

Birmingham was one of six universities in the Midlands to benefit from the £60 million investment into energy research.

Professor Martin Freer, Head of the School of Physics and Astronomy and Director of the Birmingham Energy Institute, says: 'The development and management of heat is a bigger challenge to society than electricity generation and decarbonisation. It has been neglected because it is so complex.'

Inefficient production and use of heat – and by extension, the management of cold (e.g. keeping

computer servers, food, and buildings cool) – wastes energy and puts additional strain on electricity supply and carbon emissions.

As a world leader in thermal energy research, the University will concentrate its work in this area, working with industrial partners to develop new ways to reduce energy costs.

Professor Freer adds: 'In the future, technology should be able to take heat from the surrounding area and pump it back into the building. If that heat can be successfully stored and distributed, then it could benefit whole cities rather than just individual homes.'

Learn more at  
[www.birmingham.ac.uk/energy](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/energy)

**Tweet,  
like,  
share**



### #UoBbackintime

Alumni, staff, students and friends shared their photos and memories from 2009 – the year that saw the launch of the University's Circles of Influence fundraising campaign.

#### @yasmin0687

– I graduated in 2009 @ [birminghamalum](https://twitter.com/birminghamalum) – ready to conquer the world!



#### @parsons\_AJ

– Where was I in 2009? Commanding my Royal Signals regiment.



#### @Katie\_Dancey –

in 2009 I was a brand new Fresher at the world's best uni!



@mattharrisonnn – 2009 me: terrible hair, not thinking about applying to uni, let alone 4 great years at [@unibirmingham](https://twitter.com/unibirmingham)!

## Suddy marvellous!

Almost 400 University alumni, students, and staff descended on the Great Hall in June for the ninth annual Research Poster Conference.

Postgraduate researchers from across all of the University's five Colleges presented more than 120 posters on a wide range of topics, from medical imaging to biblical manuscripts, at the event hosted by the Graduate School.

Emily Summerton, completing an Engineering Doctorate in the School of Chemical Engineering, was selected as the overall winner for her poster, receiving £1,000 towards her research. Emily's winning poster described her research group's work into crystallisation rates of everyday household cleaning items such as washing up liquid.

'Our goal is to minimise the risk of crystallisation and subsequently improve profits for companies and reduce waste for consumers,' explains Emily.

'Being awarded overall conference winner was a great honour, especially as a first-year EngD student.

'The poster provides a basic understanding of the project accessible to people from all disciplines. The focus of the project is low temperature stability of detergent systems so it is possible to relate my work to products used in everyday life.'

To find out more about Graduate School events and the support it provides to the University's postgraduate community visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/graduateschool](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/graduateschool)



# GIVING BIRTH *to hope*

Imagine being a mother in labour, suffering severe complications and being forced to walk miles to hospital to seek medical treatment. The idea seems absurd in the UK, but for women in developing countries it is a reality. Researchers at Birmingham are working on simple ways to save mothers' lives.





Sessay, from Sierra Leone, was married aged 14 and had her first child aged 15. At 18 years old, she became pregnant with twins and delivered the first baby in her village home, but her contractions stopped before the birth of the second child.

She travelled for several hours, on foot and by boat, to get to the nearest hospital, where a midwife helped her deliver the second baby, nearly 24 hours after the first.

She then started to haemorrhage large amounts of blood and was taken to a surgical ward, where she waited to see the only doctor in the district. It took about an hour for the doctor to get to her; but by that time it was too late.

For women in developing countries, Sessay's experience is a too-common

reality. A woman dies unnecessarily every 90 seconds in childbirth, leaving more than a million children motherless each year.

Birmingham's global maternal health researchers know they can save lives by working with communities to develop better care plans for new mothers, covering everything from health care and food security to transport.

Lead academic Professor Arri Coomarasamy says: 'Our research will have a global impact and not just for a set period of time. We'd like to invest in local people to achieve sustainability when our intervention stops and if these simple measures can be introduced on a wider scale, we will save lives indefinitely.'

#### Arri's team is fundraising for four key projects in Tanzania and Malawi:

- Sepsis prevention (see below)
- Emergency transport, life-saving birth kits and health promotion services. For this, the team needs funding for a community transport service. Reducing travel time can make the difference between life and death
- 'Do women eat last?' A data project involving food security and nutrition (healthy eating for mothers is key for saving lives)
- Community groups. Setting up women's groups in Tanzania to help mothers share experiences and inspire community action. This project will explore the effects of women coming together to work out solutions for themselves

## FOCUS ON *maternal sepsis*

Sepsis is when infection causes a severe, widespread and dangerous reaction from the body and is suffered by five million pregnant women worldwide each year. This can cause septic shock, a rapid fall in blood pressure that can lead to multiple organ failure and if left untreated, death.

In developing countries, a third of women who develop severe sepsis during pregnancy or childbirth will die compared to just 0.05% in the UK.

The Sepsis Six Tool is a suite of steps developed by the UK Sepsis Trust and used in the NHS to ensure patients with

sepsis get the right care, without delay. Doctors and nurses throughout the UK are trained to use the kit, which includes giving antibiotics, conducting blood tests and ensuring patients are carefully monitored.

In Malawi, Arri's team are working with communities to understand which parts of this sepsis bundle could be applied in the developing world and are adapting the package to suit the environment and facilities available.

David Lissauer, clinical lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and project lead, says: 'In Malawi, if you

don't spot signs of the infection early, then the sophisticated hospital care needed to treat it is simply not available. We're developing a care package that can be used by everyone from nurses and midwives to community healthcare officers to identify sepsis in its early stages and treat it immediately.'

Ultimately it is hoped that the package will be widely adopted in developing countries, saving the lives of millions of mothers worldwide.

Learn more at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/globalmaternalhealth](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/globalmaternalhealth)



#### How can I help?

These projects will empower women, enable life-saving transport, and equip clinicians with tools to battle sepsis but we need your help to make them a reality.

Your support can help Arri's team trial the life-saving sepsis

care package in Malawi and Tanzania. Donate £50 today by completing the donation form enclosed with this magazine or visiting [www.bhamalumni.org/givenow](http://www.bhamalumni.org/givenow) and you could fund a day's sepsis prevention training for a healthcare professional. Thank you.



*Old Joe* meets two of the many Birmingham graduates who just can't keep their feet on the ground...



He was air sick the first time he flew a plane with the University Air Squadron, but Captain Jock Lowe (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1965; PhD Chemical Engineering, 1969; Hon DUniv, 2003) went on to pilot Concorde and become a leading figure in the aviation industry.

Jock, so called by his Chemical Engineering classmates because they mistook his Geordie accent for a Scottish one, got into flying by chance

after his flatmates put his name down for the squadron to make up the numbers.

He found he had a passion and skill for flying, and joined British Airways as a trainee pilot after studying for his PhD. He flew VC10s and worked as a pilot instructor before he captained the plane credited as being a marvel of modern engineering.

'I don't know anybody that didn't think Concorde was their favourite aeroplane.



It just had some charisma about it. It was a beautiful fly, once you got used to its idiosyncrasies,' he says.

Jock flew Concorde from 1972 until the fleet was retired in 2003, the longest of any BA pilot, and also trained colleagues how to fly.

A keen sailor in his retirement, he says there have been more tricky moments in his boat on the Thames than behind the controls of a plane travelling at 22 miles

per minute. Later in his career, Jock moved into various aviation management roles with BA and other airlines.

Among the achievements he is most proud of is a marketing campaign that kept Concorde flying in the late 1970s, transforming it from making a loss to making £50 million net profit a year.

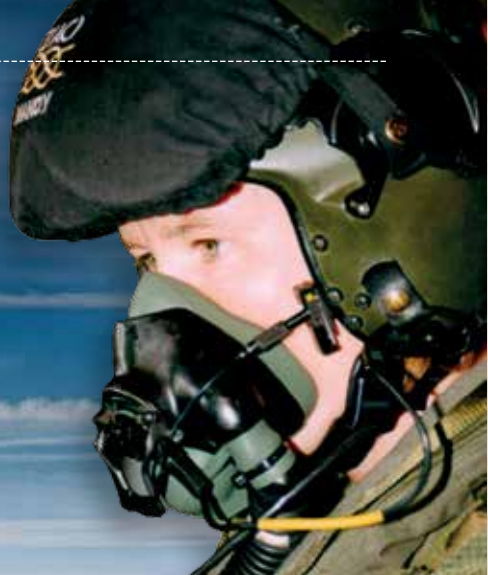
Post retirement, he has used his lifetime of knowledge to design and promote one of the options for

the Heathrow Airport expansion. One of his favourite pieces of life advice is to remember there are no god-like creatures.

'I've met all the world's top politicians, businessmen and royalty and everyone is human,' he says. 'In some cases, it's amazing how just a little bit of turbulence will bring even those who think they're superior metaphorically down to earth.'



# THE AVIATORS



Former Royal Air Force fast jet pilot Mandy Hickson (BSc Geography and Sports Science, 1994), is now a motivational and keynote speaker.



Flying is in the blood for Mandy. Her grandfather was a pilot in the Second World War, and from joining the Air Training Corps at 13 to flying jets on the frontline for the Royal Air Force, she has followed in the family flight-path.

'Listening to my grandpa sparked my ambition,' explains Mandy. 'I loved his stories, but there was no way at the time that a woman could enter that world.'

'However, I believe in aiming high, no matter how unachievable your goals may seem.'

Mandy's ambition was literally sky-high: to fly with the RAF; something she achieved in 1994 when she became the second ever female Air Force fast jet pilot. 'It was challenging,' she says. 'I was the only female on every squadron I was on, but when you are working as part of a team, it really doesn't matter, as you bond and work together regardless of gender.'

Another challenge Mandy faced in her 17 years with the RAF was serving three tours of duty in Iraq. 'Being shot at on a daily basis was of course a harsh environment,' says Mandy, 'but I also got to collaborate closely with cross-national teams, which was very enjoyable.'

Mandy now keeps her feet firmly on the ground as a motivational speaker using skills and stories from her years as a pilot. Her work also takes her into schools to share her experiences, something she uses to encourage other women in their careers. 'I hope to inspire the next generation to look outside the box and aim high,' she explains.



Find out more about Mandy's career in our video interview at <https://youtu.be/4eAoH33JeNo>

## High fliers

Other successful alumni in the world of aviation include...

**Robert Martin** (MSc(Eng) Integrated Manufacturing Systems, 1994), Director of Martin-Baker, world-leading producer of ejection seats

Air hostess turned executive pilot to the stars, **Anita Mays** (BA English and French, 1983)

**Major Laura Nicholson DFC AAC** (BMus Music, 1997), heroic Chinook helicopter pilot who twice entered an Afghani firefight to extract casualties

**Group Captain Simon Paterson** (BSc Chemistry, 1993), Station Commander and Puma Helicopter Force Commander at RAF Benson

Former Red Arrow and Royal Australian Air Force pilot **Zane Sennett** (BSc Geography, 1998)

Retired petrolchemical engineer **Ian Bremner** (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1958) became an International Service Manager for Continental (now United) Airlines at the age of 62, and has been flying for the past 15 years. He plans to re-retire when he turns 80!

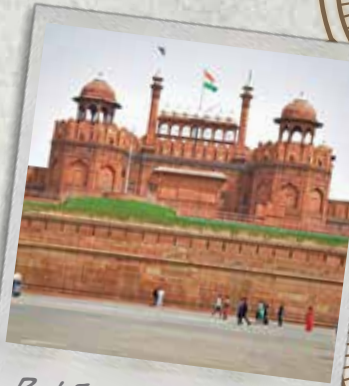
If you can add to this list, please email [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) and let us know.

## SPOTLIGHT

GUEST ED LOVES



India Gate



Red Fort



Presidential Palace

# Delhi

Delhi is famous across the world for its outstanding culture, cuisine, and cricket.

Said to be one of the oldest cities in the world, and with a population of more than 16 million people, modern and old Delhi sit side-by-side. From temples to transport terminals, minarets to malls, and even an International Toilet Museum, Delhi sights are as diverse as its history. Delhi is also known for its sporting prowess, hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2010 and Cricket World Cup in 2011; a competitive edge that carries through to business and has made the city the largest commercial centre in Northern India.

The University has long-established links with Delhi: students from India were first welcomed to the Edgbaston campus in 1909; and the University has had an office in New Delhi since 2009 to strengthen and build partnerships with universities, businesses, and government. These include research collaborations on railways and public health, and internship opportunities for students.



Visit [www.facebook.com/indiaofficeuob](https://www.facebook.com/indiaofficeuob) for the latest news and events from the India Office.

## What do alumni and staff recommend to see and do in Delhi?



**James Billingham (BSc Mechanical Engineering, 1984) has travelled to India more than 30 times.**

- Humayun's Tomb – tomb of Mughal Emperor Humayun, commissioned by his wife in 1565
- India Gate – India's Cenotaph. It is so poignant to stand in the India sun looking up at those familiar names from France and Flanders from a century ago
- The Red Fort – curtain walled fort in the city centre

- Indian Railway Museum – comprehensive collection of locomotives and artefacts from India's rich railway heritage



**Aprajita Kalra is Country Coordinator for the University's India Office**

- Dilli Haat open-air food plaza with more than 60 artisan craft shops
- Okhla Bird Sanctuary – located in the heart of the city, this is a pleasant surprise amidst the hustle and bustle

- Temple complex of Akshardham – one of the modern marvels of architecture
- Rajghat – a serene memorial where Mahatma Gandhi's remains are buried

Send your tips and pictures to

[alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) and the best will be featured on this page in the next issue of *Old Joe*.

**NEXT STOP  
TOKYO**





# A POSITIVE SPIN

From improving mobile phones to monitoring the condition of roads and railways, entrepreneurial academics are developing innovative businesses at Birmingham.



David Coleman and Dr Sampson Hu

## BOOSTING BUSINESS

BizzInn, the business incubator at Birmingham Research Park, was set-up to help new innovative businesses and provides a range of free services to start-up companies with technology based commercial concepts.

The Birmingham Research Park also offers the BioHub to science-based start-ups. This new building houses state-of-the-art laboratories and facilities they may not otherwise be able to afford to rent.

Head of Enterprise Acceleration David Coleman says: 'Hi-tech startup companies can take a lot of time and money to get to market, whether they are developing a new therapeutic or diagnostic device. We can help by providing intellectual property protection, applying for patents, securing investment to develop the proof of concept and a business plan – and a local base for the business.'



## ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

A product that will help minimise disruption for commuters won the Most Innovative Idea category at the University's 2015 Innovation Competition.

Altasense is a suite of tools which monitors road and rail temperature and moisture levels to tackle common problems such as ice and snow, leaves on the line, and buckling rail tracks.

Dr Lee Chapman, from the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences invented the product: 'This innovative technology will minimise cost to companies caused by the impact of weather and climate on infrastructure and has already generated a lot of interest from potential industry partners,' he says.



To find out more about how the University can help your spin-out business grow, contact David on [d.coleman@bham.ac.uk](mailto:d.coleman@bham.ac.uk)



The reigning Midlands Enterprise University of the Year provides specialist expertise to academics and start-up companies through the Enterprise Acceleration Team, which has helped 100 companies since 2013.

These include University spin-out company Smart Antennae Technologies (SAT), which is developing a highly compact next generation mobile phone antenna to replace existing types, such as Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, GPS, 3G and 4G.

Originating from research in the School of Electronic and Electrical Systems Engineering, the product is a single multi-band multi-input-output antenna system, which saves space in handsets, costs less to build and improves performance.

Founder Dr Sampson Hu (BEng Communications Systems Engineering with Business Management, 2006; MPhil Electronic and Electrical Engineering, 2008; PhD Electronic and Electrical Engineering, 2012) says: 'We're now in phase two of our development contract of the antenna for a leading laptop manufacturer, and aim to have a fully commercial product by the end of 2016. Once that is established, we can then continue discussions with phone manufacturers.'

**30** NUMBER OF SPIN-OUT COMPANIES ON THE UNIVERSITY'S PORTFOLIO

**£650 million**  
COMBINED VALUE OF THOSE COMPANIES

**£320 million**  
TOTAL INVESTMENT RAISED SINCE 2010



# Qur'an discovery CREATES GLOBAL IMPACT

The unearthing of one of the world's oldest manuscripts of the Qur'an at the University this summer created a surge of interest across the globe.

Radiocarbon dating of two parchment leaves previously misbound with others from a similar, newer document, suggested with 95.4% accuracy that they originated in the period between the years 568 and 645. The manuscript therefore appears to date from close to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, who is generally thought to have lived between 570 and 632.

Researchers conclude that the manuscript is therefore among the earliest written textual evidence of the Islamic holy book known to survive, giving it global significance to Muslim heritage and the study of Islam.

Susan Worrall, the University's Director of Special Collections, says: 'The response to this story has been tremendous, with blanket media coverage across the BBC and national newspapers, as well as internationally.

'The story was on the front page of the *New York Times*, as well as the *Wall Street Journal*, *China Daily*, *The Times of India*, *Terra* and *O Globo* in Brazil, and film crews from ITV, Sky, Al Jazeera and Reuters were also on campus.

'The radiocarbon dating contributes significantly to our understanding of the earliest written copies of the Qur'an. We are thrilled that such an important historical document is here in Birmingham, the most culturally diverse city in the UK.'

The parchment is part of the Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern documents in the Cadbury Research Library. Funded by Quaker philanthropist Edward Cadbury, the collection was acquired to raise the status of Birmingham as an intellectual centre for religious studies and attract prominent theological scholars.

**The Qur'an manuscript will be on public display at the University during October.**

## SUPPORT OUR WORK

To find out how you can support the University's work to preserve and date historically important manuscripts, email [giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



Image credit: Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham

# SM ART OPPORTUNITY

The question of serendipity has intrigued philosophers for years, and Richard Howard-Griffin (GDL Law, 2007) is proof that even the smallest incident can have profound results.

In 2007 Richard was embarking on a career at international law firm Slaughter and May; today he runs successful galleries in London and Los Angeles and is at the forefront of UK street art. But what inspired this change of passion?

Entering a top-ranking London firm marked the culmination of years of hard work, but for Richard something didn't feel right. 'I was a fairly maverick student and went into law with the same attitude,' he explains.

'Law as an academic subject intrigued me but working as a solicitor did not match my sensibilities. I was simply too radical for it - at least in my own mind!'

Frustrated by the limitations of his work Richard began to feel that a change was due. 'I had a real unease about what I was doing with my life. I'd worked so hard to get to this position, but felt I simply couldn't go any further along that line,' he says.

Drawing a line under his legal career

Richard found himself armed with determination but no outlet for this new-found freedom. 'I had a vague notion that I wanted to run my own business, and obviously I still had bills to pay,' Richard explains.

'I had an interest in street art but had never considered it as a career until I began to immerse myself into it more.'

Richard took the first steps into the world of street art by getting to know the many artists around his home in London and running a couple of shows. However, things really took off in 2013 when a chance meeting led to a sell-out show and the launch of the Howard Griffin Gallery.

'I was walking down Shoreditch high street and saw a guy with his dog drawing away on the street,' says Richard. 'I liked his art so stopped to chat.' The 'guy' was John Dolan, a homeless artist who Richard subsequently worked with to launch a pop-up show that became a hit

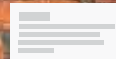
across the art world and international media, and cemented both of their art careers. The show allowed John and his dog George to turn their lives around, and was the first of many sell-out exhibitions for the Howard Griffin Gallery; something Richard believes is an example of serendipity in action.

'You could say it was just luck that I was walking down the street, and saw a guy drawing,' explains Richard, 'but you have to be able to see the opportunities out there and not just walk past. I think too many people close themselves off from success by not opening themselves up to possibility.'

With two successful galleries, Richard is certainly seizing his own opportunities. 'Having had two careers that are so different really opens your eyes to just how many possibilities are out there,' he concludes.

Find out more at  
[www.howardgriffingallery.com](http://www.howardgriffingallery.com)





**WIN**

For a chance to win a limited edition print from the Howard-Griffin Gallery answer the following question:

What is the name of the artist Richard collaborated with on his first sell-out show?

To enter send your answer and name to [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) by 31 December 2015.





GUEST ED LOVES

# #UoBsaysthanks

## as Circles of Influence smashes fundraising target

It's official. Supporters of the University's Circles of Influence campaign have raised £193.4 million for the University. Our generous donors have raised £84.8 million, with the rest of the total coming from philanthropic donations to research.



WE ARE WORKING ON CLINICAL TRIALS IN MALAWI TO TREAT A VERY AGGRESSIVE FORM OF BLOOD CANCER CALLED BURKITT'S LYMPHOMA THAT AFFECTS PREDOMINATELY CHILDREN IN AFRICA. WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT WE SIMPLY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO THIS WORK TO SAVE CHILDREN'S LIVES. THANK YOU!

*Dr Farhat Khanim, Research Scientist,  
School of Biosciences*



**Thank you to everyone who has helped the campaign since 2009; you are among 11,000 donors and 5,000 volunteers who have supported 250 extraordinary projects, making a difference on campus, locally, and across the globe...**

### **1 Bramall Music Building**

Completed in 2012, and completing Joseph Chamberlain's vision for the Aston Webb semi-circle, the Bramall Music Building was made possible thanks to donations from 260 donors including a transformational gift from the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation.

### **2 Innovative research**

More than £5.5 million has been donated to support research across the University. Projects include research to treat childhood blood cancer, breast cancer, and prostate cancer, hydrogen research, and support for the Shakespeare Institute.

### **3 Funding scholarships**

The campaign has awarded 570 student scholarships through the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme, helping many students who otherwise may not have been able to attend university.

### **4 Student support**

More than £2.5 million has been given to improve our student experience. This includes the Hands Up fund, which has supported student projects from careers fairs to cheerleading, and ballroom dancing to battle re-enactments.

### **5 Transforming campus**

Circles of Influence has supported campus developments equivalent to 9.6 football pitches including redevelopment of the Lapworth Museum, and the new Library, Sports Centre, University School, and Institute of Translational Medicine.

### **6 Enhancing teaching**

Researchers at the Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER) are using Nao robots supported by Circles of Influence to teach children with autism and improve their classroom experience.

### **7 Birmingham Fellows**

Support for the Birmingham Fellows scheme has helped more than 60 outstanding post-doctoral researchers to join the University.



## **What next?**

These are just a few of the people and projects that our amazing donors have helped to support through Circles of Influence. The campaign may have closed on 31 July 2015 but the tradition of charitable giving to the University will continue with a wide range of groundbreaking research and student support schemes that you can help fund. For examples see pages 8–11.

Visit [www.uobsaysthanks.com](http://www.uobsaysthanks.com) to find out more about how the campaign has benefited students, colleagues and the community, and how you can get involved in the next steps of fundraising for the University.



# COMMUNITY DAY

As part of the celebrations for the successful completion of the Circles of Influence fundraising campaign, the University opened its doors to staff, students, alumni and the people of Birmingham in September for Community Day. Visitors enjoyed a wide range of free activities and events, as well as taking part in a trail around campus to find out more about projects supported by Circles of Influence.



The Ballroom and Latin American Dance Society - who received Circles of Influence funding - offered lessons to visitors



Total raised:  
**£193,426,877.47**

Dr Farhat Khanim, Research Scientist,  
School of Biosciences, talks with donors





Music scholar Samuel Booth performs in the Elgar Concert Hall



Terry Bramall (centre) - founding donor for the Bramall Music Building



# A wheely good cause

Professor Charlie Craddock believes Birmingham has taken a significant step towards finding a cure for all blood cancers within 30 years following the London 2 Paris: Inspiring the Revolution charity bike ride.

The Director of the Centre for Clinical Haematology and the co-founder of Cure Leukaemia joined former England footballer Geoff Thomas and other sporting celebrities when 300 intrepid cyclists took on the challenge, riding 500km in four days for Birmingham, Let's Cure Leukaemia.

The University's Deputy Head of Business Engagement Vickie Pargetter

(BCom Commerce, 2002), above right, and other alumni also took part and Charlie says: 'I am extremely grateful to everyone who took part and all those who have donated.'

'The ride was an unforgettable event and with the funds raised going towards the completion of the Institute of Translational Medicine, more patients will have access to pioneering treatment to fight this terrible disease.'

You can find out more at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/cureleukaemia](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/cureleukaemia) and make a donation by visiting [www.justgiving.com/ProfCraddock/](http://www.justgiving.com/ProfCraddock/)



## Have you been inspired?

Could you help raise money for the University? We are always looking forward to the next charity challenge, which could be as small as a bake sale or as big as taking part in the Morrisons Great Birmingham Run. For a Fundraise for Us pack, contact Laura Fairbanks at [l.fairbanks@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.fairbanks@bham.ac.uk) or +44 (0)121 414 8894.

## An online degree to take you further

As a graduate of the University of Birmingham, you'll be familiar with our reputation for pioneering new approaches to education. We're proud to announce three new online postgraduate courses:

- **Masters of Business Administration (MBA)**
- **Masters of Science (MSc) in International Business**
- **Masters of Public Administration (MPA)**

Students will have access to dynamic and interactive learning via our online platform, providing a modern solution for today's postgraduate students. Teaching will be delivered through a series of videos, live online webinars, and interactive media which means students can study from home, work, the train and so on. For some programmes there is also the option to attend a weekend residential on campus.

Classes for all programmes start in January or May 2016 and applications are now being accepted. For further information, please contact [onlinecourses@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:onlinecourses@contacts.bham.ac.uk)







GUEST ED LOVES



# PERSISTENCE

## PAYS OFF

*The 2015 Alumni of the Year share the secrets of their success.*

While they may have followed different career paths, Billie Major (BSc Geography and Physical Education, 1980) and James Eder (BCom Commerce, 2005) both agree that their success has been down to persistence and believing in themselves.

James has been running his business, The Beans Group, since he left Birmingham while Billie Major had a lengthier journey to her current position as Corporate Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Capgemini Aspire.

After graduating, Billie expected to pursue a career in sports science but in the tough economic climate of the early 1980s, was out of work and even lived in a squat for a while.

She took a 60% drop in salary to retrain in a new career in IT, working her way up the company ladder and gaining valuable insight into the roles and responsibilities of the 2,000 IT professionals she now leads at Capgemini, a £700 million business.

She identifies her ability to build loyalty with her colleagues as a major asset, as well as consulting others' opinions before making major decisions.

Entrepreneur James set up Student Beans with his brother Michael almost from the moment he graduated, having identified an opportunity for students to have a single online hub they could visit for offers and discounts from retailers, restaurants and businesses.



The Beans Group has since expanded to incorporate three different strands, with more than 40 employees and offices in both Birmingham and London.

James claims he is motivated by the idea of making a difference in people's lives by helping them connect with others and adds: 'The Beans Group is all about helping that to happen and the University was hugely important in providing me with the opportunities to learn the skills necessary to run a business.'

'From the moment I arrived at Birmingham, I've tried to be open to meeting new people. My room in Mason Hall was one that 300 people walked past to get to the bar and canteen, and left me with an amazing network of friends.'

James, who has returned to the University every year to volunteer by giving guest lectures or running training courses, adds: 'I always tell students who want to know how to be successful to think about what they can do to add value and make a difference to a company. Do that and you become invaluable.'



### DID YOU KNOW?

Do you know any inspirational alumni like Billie and James? Nominate them for the alumni of the year award at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumnioftheyear](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumnioftheyear)



# campus connections

Three alumni tell *Old Joe* about the respective lifelong friendships they formed with classmates during their time at Birmingham.

Moves overseas have not proved a barrier to one particular set of friends from Birmingham, and according to **Clive Fowler** (BSc Geology, 1970) it has even worked as a prompt for informal reunions.

Clive and some of his friends from the 1970 class of Geology recently celebrated the 45th anniversary of their graduation in the South of France, and reunion trips abroad have been a regular occurrence.

Many members of the group, who have unofficially dubbed themselves the Birmingham University Geological Graduation Reunion Society (complete with personalised t-shirts and baseball caps), have enjoyed trips in the past to Western Australia, Tuscany, Botswana and the USA.

**Godfrey Worsey** (BDS Dentistry, 1957) kept up his ties with classmates from the University despite moving to Tywyn in Wales to open a dentistry practice.

He runs an annual class reunion each October in Tewkesbury for up to 10 of his fellow alumni, and enjoys hill walking, gardening and skiing in Europe and the USA with friends and family. Now retired, the family connection with Birmingham extends to his niece Jenny Ayres (BSc Geography/Physical Education, 1985) while nephew Stewart Langston (BDS Dentistry, 1989) now runs the Tywyn practice.

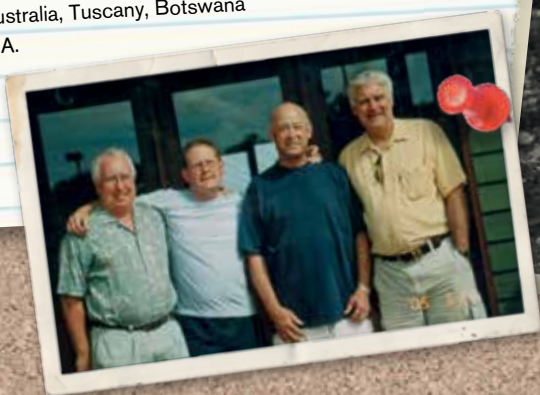
Sport is also a connecting factor for **Adam Freeman** (LLB Law, 1992) who runs an alumni cricket team called the Bunnies (Birmingham University Nomads Naughty In Every Sense) pictured above.

Originally formed by AJ Smith (BA Hispanic Studies, 1989), all members played for the University and tour at the end of July in and around Chipping Norton in England. Adam says, 'Age has diminished our sporting prowess, but it is great to get together every year and share our love of cricket, curry and the University.'

## What's your campus connection?

Tell us about your family, work or friendship connections to Birmingham, share your latest news or a story from your time at the University.

Tweet @birminghamalum  
or email [alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconnunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



# EVENTS

For full event details or help organising your own alumni event or reunion visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events), email [alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk) or call +44 (0)121 414 8904

## OCTOBER

### BRAMALL COMEDY NIGHT

Elgar Concert Hall,  
starts Thursday 8 October  
[www.birmingham.ac.uk/bramall/events](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/bramall/events)



### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

Simon Stevens, CEO of NHS  
England, Edgbaston campus,  
Wednesday 14 October, 6.00pm



### BIRMINGHAM HEROES LECTURE

Professor Clive Roberts on 'The  
Future of Our Railways: Embracing  
Digital Railway Technology'  
Edgbaston campus,  
Tuesday 20 October,  
6.30–9.30pm



### BOOK TO THE FUTURE

Festival celebrating the written  
and spoken word, featuring the  
BBC's Jane Garvey (BA English,  
1985) interviewing SJ Watson  
(BSc Physics, 1992), plus  
academic, student and local talent.  
Campus-wide, 15–17 October

### QUR'AN MANUSCRIPT

On public display on Edgbaston  
campus until 25 October



## NOVEMBER

### HOUSE OF LORDS RECEPTION

Invitation only,  
Friday 6 November,  
6.45–8.30pm



## DECEMBER

### FESTIVE DRINKS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Carol Service, Great Hall,  
Monday 7 December,  
6.00–9.00pm



## MARCH

### LONDON PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Network with fellow alumni from finance, insurance,  
property and legal professions, date to be confirmed



## MAY

### BIRMINGHAM HEROES LECTURE

London, date to be confirmed

## JUNE

### ENGINEERING AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES REUNION

Edgbaston campus,  
Saturday 18 June

## JULY

### WORLD SHAKESPEARE CONFERENCE

Stratford-upon-Avon and London,  
Sunday 31 July–Saturday 6 August



## SEPTEMBER

### GOLDEN AND 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

Edgbaston campus,  
Friday 16 September







# Joe Biddlestone

**(BSc Chemical Engineering, 1958; PhD Chemical Engineering, 1961)**

Celebrates 60 years since joining the Chemical Engineering department as an undergraduate this autumn. After half a century as a member of staff, working in various departmental and leadership roles, he is a Birmingham stalwart, an Emeritus Professor, and still actively involved with University life.

**I was not encouraged** to consider a career in chemical engineering, which was possibly why I chose it as my degree subject. Chemical engineering was not really known in the school system but fortunately the Institute of Chemical Engineers produced some very good literature.

**There were only 4,700 students** at Birmingham during my studies as opposed to 30,000 today, and I have many fond memories of my time as an undergraduate and postgraduate. A highlight was Rag Week; the department built a float every year to process through the city.

**No-one would have dreamed** of asking the students if their lectures were any good in the 1950s. That all changed after the sit-in year, 1968, when students were given a voice and representation on Council.

**I've often wondered** what drew me back to work at the University. I got a phone call from my PhD supervisor who told me a lectureship

was available. I was eventually offered the job, at a cut in salary, but I wanted to come back to research and the University. I'm the only Chemical Engineering alumnus to have become Professor and Head of Department at Birmingham. That always gives me a little smile.

**There is and has always been** a friendly, community ethos about the department. That's probably related to the fact that it's a relatively small discipline. We have an excellent relationship with recruiters, we maintain links with our students, and the staff, probably without exception, come from industry.

**One of the joys of my job** is the continual procession of students who go on to be graduates and enjoy successful careers. What alumni will tell you is that they have very fond memories of their student days and that they owe the department and the University for their careers. They leave feeling that they really belong.

**My favourite place on campus** is the Great Hall. I've probably attended every Chemical Engineering degree congregation ceremony there since 1965.

**If you have a demanding career**, which working at the University is, it's very positive to do a totally separate activity. I'm a church organist and I sing in, and conduct, choirs. I do have another life, and a family!

We'd love to hear your memories of your favourite tutors and lecturers at Birmingham. Email [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) and let us know.





GUEST ED LOVES

# 300,000 alumni

The University's 300,000th graduate completed their degree this summer, joining a proud heritage of outstanding Birmingham graduates spanning more than 100 years.

To celebrate this momentous occasion the University launched a search for a member of the Class of 2015 to act as the symbolic 300,000th alumnus.

Many outstanding students applied and Shenaid Tapper was selected to share her final year, from the suspense of results day to the excitement of graduation, with fellow students and alumni.

Due to the volume and quality of nominations, the University was also delighted to introduce its '12 to watch' from the Class of 2015. Each student has been involved in a range of academic and extra-curricular activity across the University and is passionate about their time at Birmingham.



## 1 Amy Bainbridge (LLB Law)

'My favourite sight on campus is Old Joe. The clock tower is awe-inspiring; every time I look at it I'm reminded of how hard I worked to get here.'

## 2 Joe Taylor (BA Sociology)

'Using just three words to sum up my time at the University is hard but they would have to be challenging, awesome, and memorable.'

## 3 Edward Fitter (BSc Biochemistry)

'I've loved every minute of my time at the University. The only thing I regret is not joining the battle re-enactment society.'

## 7 Alice Power (BA English Language)

'The best thing Birmingham has given me is self-belief and confidence. I'm staying here next year to study a Masters degree and can't wait.'

## 8 Hannah Bevington (BA Childhood, Culture and Education)

'Birmingham has connections to some amazing places and offers great opportunities to gain experience in a different country or culture.'

## 9 Katrina Coleman (BNurs Nursing)

'I have had many special moments at the University but the best has to be when a patient took my hand, and told me that I'm going to make a great nurse.'



Shenaid Tapper  
is officially our  
300,000th alumna!

**4** *Tom Stanley*  
(BSc Economics)

'My advice for new students would be – plan your time well and you should never have to sacrifice a friend's birthday party for a night in the library!'

**5** *Matt Harrison*  
(BSc Physics with  
International Study)

'Summing up my university life in three words can't possibly do it justice, but I would have to go with formative, enriching, unforgettable.'

**6** *Joe Alderman*  
(MBChB Medicine)

'The University has given me the confidence to drive my own development. The skills my course has helped me develop will be vital for my continued education as a junior doctor.'

**10** *Shenaid Tapper*  
(BSc Planning and Economics)

'As we make the transition from students to graduates we follow in the footsteps of 300,000 amazing UoB graduates. I can't wait to see what the Class of 2015 will achieve – good luck, everyone!'

**11** *Suna Yokes*  
(MSci Human Geography)

'University gives you the chance to try lots of new things. As my favourite quote goes: you never know what result will come of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result.'

**12** *Carly Thomas*  
(BSc Chemistry)

'My favourite place on campus is Chancellor's Court. It's the perfect place to relax and take a break from work. It's also the perfect spot for a selfie with Old Joe!'



# 300,000 alumni

## Sir Paul Nurse

(BSc Biological Sciences, 1970; Hon DSc, 1998) is one of the University's eight Nobel Prize winners. A geneticist and cell biologist, Sir Paul was honoured in 2001 for his discoveries of protein molecules that control the division of cells and enabled the development of new treatments for cancer. He is now President of the Royal Society and Chief Executive of the Francis Crick Institute.



1970

## Chrissie Wellington MBE

(BSc Geography, 1998; Hon DUniv, 2010) is a four-time Ironman Triathlon World Champion and the first British athlete to hold the title. In 2009 Chrissie was voted *Sunday Times* Sportswoman of the Year and in 2010 was awarded an MBE for her passionate campaigning for women's sport.



1998

As the University celebrates the graduation of its 300,000th student, *Old Joe* looks back at just a few of the amazing alumni who share the Birmingham bond with the Class of 2015.

1914

## Dame Hilda Lloyd

(InterBSc Applied/Pure Science, 1914; MBChB Medicine, 1916) became the University's first female professor in 1944, and the first female President of any Royal Medical College, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, in 1949. She also introduced obstetrical 'flying squads' in Birmingham, which saved the lives of countless mothers and babies.



1917

## Li Siguang

(BSc Applied/Pure Science, 1917; MSc Applied/Pure Science 1918; DSc Geological Sciences 1931) helped develop a fuller understanding of how the continents and oceans move around the planet. He was influential in the discovery of much of China's oil and gas reserves, a pioneer in predicting earthquakes, and a trailblazer in establishing the geological history of China.



## Matthew Goode

(BA Drama and Theatre Arts, 1999) is one of the UK's rising actors, as shown by his roles in many film and television hits. From graphic novel adaptation *Watchmen* to *Downton Abbey*, Matthew has worked with Hollywood stars including Woody Allen, Nicole Kidman, and Colin Firth, and is currently working with Benedict Cumberbatch on animated adventure *Magik*.



1999



Circles of influence

# The right tools



GUEST ED LOVES



The latest in our series about equipment staff at the University simply couldn't do without looks at how a USB stick is helping combat deadly viruses...

**Dr Nick Loman (PhD Biosciences, 2012), of the Institute of Microbiology and Infection:**

The recent Ebola epidemic in West Africa claimed thousands of lives and is the largest outbreak of the virus ever seen. By using this new MinION kit we are able to take genome surveillance technology to the heart of outbreaks, helping to stop the spread of disease and improve patient recovery.

Genome surveillance provides a unique view of how viruses evolve by sequencing their entire genetic code. Until recently this had been restricted

to laboratory settings and results could take weeks. With these portable 'USB stick' sequencers we have been able to travel to a virus source and sequence results in less than 48 hours.

MinIONs, developed by the British company Oxford Nanopore, test a patient's blood sample on-site rather than having to wait for lab results. As time is of the essence in treating and containing outbreaks this can have life-saving results for patients.

Find out more about Dr Loman's research at: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/ebola](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/ebola)

**Tweet,  
like,  
share**



## Get involved

You can join the conversation with fellow graduates, share your views, and keep up-to-date with the latest University news as part of the online alumni community.



Twitter:

@birminghamalum



Facebook:

University of Birmingham Alumni



LinkedIn:

University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends



**RECOMMEND  
YOUR UNIVERSITY**

**Young people across the world use LinkedIn to select a university, and by giving five minutes of your time, you could recommend your alma mater to the next generation of students.**

Please write your review and post it on the recommendations tab on the University's LinkedIn page to spread the word about Birmingham as a great place to study, learn and make friends. Thank you.



**The University of  
Birmingham**

# Across campus

To find out more about your School or Department visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk)

## Arts and Law



### Sir Kenneth Branagh supports Shakespeare collaboration

Sir Kenneth Branagh (Hon DLitt, 2001) attended celebrations of Shakespeare's 451st birthday at the University's Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon. Sir Kenneth, an Honorary Fellow of the Institute, discussed his forthcoming season in the West End and applauded the Institute's partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

### Simon Halsey awarded Queen's Medal

Simon Halsey (Hon DMus, 2008), Professor and Director of Choral Activities at the University, has been awarded the Queen's Medal for Music. The prize, established in 2005, is awarded to an outstanding individual or group who have had a major influence on the musical life of the nation. Professor Halsey said: 'Choral music is a vital part of our national life and is such a force for social and educational good.'

### Decades of Drama

The Department of Drama and Theatre Arts celebrated its 50th anniversary at mac birmingham (Midlands Arts Centre) in May. Talented students and graduates performed pieces for fellow UoB alumni and friends. Fittingly for its 50th anniversary year, the Department was also ranked top Drama and Theatre Arts Department in the country in *The Guardian University League Table 2015*.

## Engineering and Physical Sciences

### Have we seen you this year?

The College has enjoyed a great year of events for alumni, staff, and students including Distinguished Lectures, the first Christmas Lecture, the second annual EPS Reunion, and EPS Societies' Awards. Videos from the Distinguished Lectures can be viewed at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/distinguished](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/distinguished)

### New Head of College appointed

Professor Andy Schofield has been appointed as the new Head of College, as successor to Professor Richard Williams. Previously Head of the School of Physics and Astronomy and Director of Research for the College, Professor Schofield studied at the University of Cambridge and worked in the USA and at Cambridge before joining Birmingham. In 2002 he was awarded the Maxwell Medal and Prize by the Institute of Physics.

## Life and Environmental Sciences

### Professor appointed Chief Scientific Adviser at BIS

Professor Tim Dafforn of the School of Biosciences has been appointed Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Professor Dafforn will ensure that the Department's policies and operations and its contribution to wider government issues are informed by fit-for-purpose science, technology and engineering advice.

### 'Chilesaurus' dinosaur uncovered

An international group of palaeontologists, including researchers from the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, has discovered a bizarre 'platypus' dinosaur in Chile. Although closely related to the notorious carnivore *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, this new lineage of dinosaur is proving to be an evolutionary jigsaw puzzle, as it preferred to graze upon plants.





## Medical and Dental Sciences

### Birmingham Dental Hospital and School opens

The Birmingham Dental Hospital and School is the first integrated, stand-alone dental hospital and school to be built in the UK for almost 40 years. A key element of the Edgbaston Medical Quarter, it has been built on the site of the former BBC Pebble Mill studios, just a mile from the main University campus. The £50 million building will soon accept the first of 600 students who will study in its state-of-the-art facilities. For more information and to watch a time-lapse video of the building taking shape visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/building/dental](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/building/dental)

### New insight into antibiotic resistance

A team of scientists led by University researchers, including Laura Piddock, Professor of Microbiology, has identified a new mechanism of antibiotic resistance in bacterial cells, which could help us in understanding, and developing solutions to, the growing problem of antibiotic resistance. The research describes the way in which a strain of Salmonella within a patient was able to develop resistance to the commonly used antibiotic drug Ciprofloxacin. The team used whole genome sequencing to reveal a mutation in the bacterial cells that allowed them to become resistant to the effects of some antibiotics.

### Institute of Translational Medicine opens

Based in the original Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Edgbaston, the Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM) has begun a phased opening ahead of its official inauguration in October 2015. A hub for the development of pioneering advances in personalised medicine, the ITM will house all necessary facilities to create an environment for industry partners in pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and related sectors to engage with health care and clinical research, bringing their products to market through the successful development of early research from 'bench to bedside'.



## UBSport

### Alumni Sports Day 2015

Current students and alumni came together to celebrate the 14th annual Alumni Sports Day in June. Participants enjoyed a total of ten sports including badminton, basketball, and water

polo. Events culminated indoors as the Gymnastics and Trampolining club jumped and somersaulted their way to the Guild of Students for the evening's festivities. With the University's new sports centre set to open next year, Alumni Sports Day 2016 looks set to be just as popular.



## Social Sciences

### School of Social Policy

The Department of Social Policy and Social Work has won a Step Up to Social Work contract, a national, intensive full-time training programme that covers everything trainee social workers need to know in 14 months. [www.stepuptosocialwork.co.uk](http://www.stepuptosocialwork.co.uk)

### Excellent REF results for School of Education

The School of Education was announced as one of the best schools in the UK for its areas of research in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014. There are four research centres in the School – the Centre for Higher Education Equity and Access, the Centre for Research in Race and Education, The Jubilee Centre for Character and Values, and the Centre for Research on Multilingualism. [www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/research/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/research/index.aspx)

### Distance learning

Birmingham Business School and the Institute of Local Government Studies launched three new exciting postgraduate distance learning courses in September. The programme offers comprehensive online MBA, MSc in International Business, and Masters in Public Administration courses. [www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2015/04/online-postgraduate-degrees.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2015/04/online-postgraduate-degrees.aspx)

# CREATIVITY CLOSE UP

From novels to new media and cinema to community engagement, the University's Department of Film and Creative Writing, established in 2014, is home to award-winning academics and students.

The Department has excellent collaborative relationships with professional partners in film, television, and theatre, and students take on a practical approach to their work with films, poetry performances and screenplays. The department also works closely with B-Film, an interdisciplinary, international

research centre at the University that collaborates with universities and institutions across the world on research, screenings, and publications.

*Old Joe* met Michele Aaron, a Senior Lecturer in Film Studies, to find out more about her research and community projects.



## ① What drew you to film studies?

Film is a mass cultural influencer; you have millions of people around the world all watching the same film. That's obviously very important and fascinates me. My undergraduate degree was in English literature and I think there is a definite crossover between the stage and the screen.

## ② What inspired your recent research on death in mainstream cinema?

The underlying theme of all my work is the representation of difficult topics in mainstream and documentary film. Death is of course a part of living and we're shown images of death all the time but are never shown how to deal with it sensibly.

Mainstream cinema represents death in clearly defined parameters and imposes a 'Hollywood glamour' that shows it as beautiful and meaningful. There is generally a lack of pain and a disassociation from the body in a Hollywood death.

## ③ Are any film-makers taking different approaches to these difficult topics?

Definitely; for all of my criticism death in film can offer a therapeutic process. When people are grieving sharing that experience through the cinema can be a cathartic experience. I am also running a project in a hospice exploring how digital technologies can transform connections between people. We are working with terminally ill patients to make their own films using handheld cameras and smart phones. As demographics of Western countries become older I am pleased to see that there is a growth in end-of-life studies across health care and academia.

## ④ What's next for you?

I'm involved in community projects and collaborating directly with filmmakers. One such project is SSAVI (Schools' Social Action Video Initiative), which allows me to work with local school children who perhaps wouldn't normally have the opportunity to go to university. We work with pupils to make their own films that they then get to edit on campus. I also run Screening Rights, a research campaign that encourages the production, promotion and discussion of films looking at human adversity. We recently held the first Screening Rights Film Festival with three days of social justice films at the Midland Arts Centre (mac) plus special talks from directors, and panel discussions. These activities are great for Birmingham but desperately need more support. My research has always been demanding but at least, in my experience, the most enthusiastic and exciting individuals are those who choose to work on the most difficult topics.

WIN

Michele's book *Death and the Moving Image: Ideology, Iconography and I* recently won the Kraszna-Krausz award for best Moving Image Book of the Year. The Kraszna-Krausz Foundation Awards are the UK's leading prizes for books on photography and the moving image and Michele was praised for her exploration of the impact of gender, race, and nation on representations of death in cinema.

For your chance to win a copy of the book answer this question: **What is the name of the recent film festival Michele held at the mac?** Send your answer, name, and degree information to [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) by 31 December 2015.

Michele is leading the Digital Storytelling: Filmmaking for the Web MOOC, running in conjunction with the BBC. Find out more about this and the University's other MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/moocs](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/moocs)



# RESEARCH REPORTS

A round-up of some of the most eye-catching research recently published by the University.

## BABY TALK WITH A TWIST

Researchers at Birmingham have discovered that wild bonobos – our closest living relatives in the primate world – communicate in a similar manner to human infants.

Bonobos use a high-pitched call type, or 'peep', that requires context to be understood. They produce these calls in a wide range of situations, across positive, negative and neutral circumstances.

The finding that the peeps alter in meaning depending on context echoes the manner in which human babies can also communicate.

Dr Zanna Clay from the School of Psychology says: 'It appears that the more we look, the more similarity we find between animals and humans.'



## SOUR TASTE FOR LIVER DISEASE

Members of the Molecular Physics Group revealed a new breath test for a natural compound found in citrus fruit that can be used to diagnose liver disease.

The compound, limonene, was found in far higher levels in the breath of patients with cirrhosis than healthy people, as the patients were unable to fully metabolise it.

Primary investigator Dr Margaret O'Hara says: 'Now that we have found a biomarker for cirrhosis, we can continue to verify how good limonene is for diagnosing liver disease.'

'If our further research is successful, in the future we can envisage a small portable breath analyser for health professionals to use, leading to earlier treatment and better survival rates.'



## THE SMARTER OPTION

Professor of Public Health Kate Jolly advocated for all pregnant women in the UK to receive iodine supplements, protecting children from possible mental impairment and providing huge cost savings to the country's health care systems.

With iodine not made naturally in the body, it must be consumed by eating foods like dairy or seafood or supplements. An iodine deficiency during pregnancy can cause delayed mental development and a lower IQ in children.

The study by University researchers examined the cost-effectiveness of iodine supplementation versus no supplementation for pregnant women in the UK, and estimated that the benefits equate to more than one IQ point per child, as well as saving the NHS £200 a time.



## REFUGEE STATUS

Professor Rob Cryer, Chair in International and Criminal Law, has changed how the human rights of refugees are protected under international law thanks to his studies.

He investigated how refugee applicants were rejected based on their membership of groups accused of crimes, and argued that joint criminal enterprise requires that the accused individual, at a minimum, made a significant contribution to the group's crime or criminal purpose, and did so with some form of awareness of either.

His research significantly influenced Canadian jurisprudence, with the Supreme Court of Canada developing a new eligibility test for refugee status, as well as shaping revised guidelines by the UN's Refugee Agency, UNHCR.



# Top-class teaching



Academics from across the University have been recognised for their teaching prowess by the student community.

The inaugural Outstanding Teaching Awards were organised by the University and Guild of Students to show the impact of excellent teaching.

Winners included Professor Stan Siebert (1), of the Department of Business and Labour Economics at Birmingham Business School, where he has worked since 1980. He is also a co-ordinator for the Access to Birmingham widening participation scheme.

His nomination said: 'Professor Siebert makes the lecture fun by engaging with us; he brings the subject to life.'

Dr Lisa Jones (2), a Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry in the School of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, also received an award. Contributing widely to education within the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, Dr Jones set up the Psychological Medicine programme and is very

involved in student welfare.

Her nomination said: 'Dr Jones is highly knowledgeable and has enhanced our learning experiences. She uses multi-method teaching, has a warm and approachable demeanour, and a genuine interest in student wellbeing.'

Other award winners were alumnus Dr Gareth Sears (BA Ancient History and Archaeology, 1998; PhD Ancient History and Archaeology, 2003), a Senior Lecturer in Ancient History (3); Human Biology, Biochemistry and Disease Lecturer Dr Steve Jacques (4); and Dr Zoe Schnepf (5), a Birmingham Fellow in the School of Chemistry.

Who were your favourite lecturers during your student days? *Old Joe* would love to hear your teaching memories. Share them by emailing [alumnicomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicomms@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

## NEW TITLES FOR CHANCELLOR

University Chancellor Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea has been announced as the new President of the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA).

The independent cross-bench peer and Cobra Beer entrepreneur has first-hand experience as an international student in the UK, at what is now London Metropolitan University and at the University of Cambridge, where he graduated in Law.

Lord Bilimoria says: 'This appointment enables me to fully support the UKCISA manifesto and make a full commitment to speaking on behalf of Britain's talented international student community in Westminster, in Whitehall, to the UK business community and around the world. In my new role I hope to represent our bright young people from overseas and to urge the government to reconsider its strategy towards those who have travelled from all over the world to learn in our world-class universities.'

### DID YOU KNOW?

Lord Bilimoria has also been awarded the title of International Indian of the Year by *India Link International*, a magazine for people with connections to India published in the UK.



# *THE* **TIME LORDS**



## It's not just scientists working to master time travel – Dr Nikk Effingham and Dr Al Wilson are considering the philosophical implications.

Ask a Birmingham alumnus what they understand about time travel and you'll probably find the conversation will quickly turn to television shows or films such as *Doctor Who*, *Back to the Future* or *The Terminator*.

The concept of turning back the clock to try and change the future is popular in fiction and, according to Dr Nikk Effingham and Dr Al Wilson, science fiction has actually helped drive forward the academic study of time travel for more than 100 years.

Al, a Birmingham Fellow in the Department of Philosophy, is working with Department Head Nikk on a research project entitled 'Probability and Time Travel' – investigating issues around assigning probabilities to various different time travel scenarios, rather than simply discussing whether time travel is possible at all.

'It seems very unlikely that there will be any usable form of time travel at any point soon,' says Al. 'So we are not interested in that side of things – you need to be talking to physicists researching quantum teleportation for that. For the purposes of our research we are asking hypothetical questions: supposing time travel is possible, how might it work and how likely might it be?'

Nikk offers one example of the kind of question they are deliberating over: 'If time travel is possible, then there would also exist the possibility that time travel would be spontaneously created by someone coming back in time to hand you the blueprint to make a time machine. You

would then follow the instructions, build the machine and go back in time to that moment, and complete the loop.

'But where did the information on the blueprint come from? What was the probability of that loop occurring – and is there a greater chance of it occurring if you are Stephen Hawking than if you are Joe Bloggs?'

The idea of 'completing the loop' is touched upon in films like *Back to the Future* and *12 Monkeys*. Hollywood has also utilised alternative theories about

time travel, revolving around the idea that for every choice you make, a universe exists in which the other choice was played out.

This 'what if?' or butterfly effect theory has proved fertile ground for science fiction stories where it is played out to change the course of history – from HG Wells' 1923 novel *Men Like Gods* through to various episodes of *Star Trek* and entire television series such as *Sliders* and *Fringe*.

While such works of fiction invariably create their own 'rules' to suit their needs, the popularity of such stories demonstrates how time travel has always been able to intrigue and stimulate debate.

As Al acknowledges: 'This project has the ability to capture people's imaginations; it's why we use time travel to get people thinking in introductory philosophy classes.'

'The project has been more successful than we expected and we will be applying for further funding. If you want to think about the metaphysics of time travel, Birmingham is as good a place as any in the world.'

**“ THIS PROJECT HAS THE ABILITY TO CAPTURE PEOPLE'S IMAGINATIONS; IT'S WHY WE USE TIME TRAVEL TO GET PEOPLE THINKING IN INTRODUCTORY PHILOSOPHY CLASSES. ”**



GUEST ED LOVES

# the transplant revolution

Birmingham's scientists and researchers have been leading the way in medical innovations since 1825. *Old Joe* looks at some key projects set to revolutionise transplants and related surgical procedures.

It's easy to take for granted some of the life-changing advances made in medicine since the 1950s; vaccine development, the treatment of cancers and artificial limbs are three examples.

Just as important has been the progress in organ transplantation. Anyone who developed a disease of the heart, lung, liver or kidneys 60 years ago faced a grim long-term prognosis. Now, a comprehensive donor programme and skilled surgical teams across the country have dramatically improved the odds of survival for those patients.

Nevertheless, the risk of organ rejection is still considerable, and patient death rates climb with each year following a transplant. In addition, there is a shortage of viable donor organs. In all three areas, researchers from Birmingham are working to change things for the better.

## Problem:

Once organs become available for donation, there is a small window in which they are healthy and suitable for transplantation.

## Response:

Andrew Ready (MBChB Medicine, 1979) has pioneered the use of hypothermic machines to maintain and even improve the function of kidney transplants. Upon removal from the donor, the organ is given oxygen and fluids and artificially pumped to make it live outside the body for longer.

Andrew is also co-founder and Medical Director of the charity Transplant Links, working in the developing world to help set up, support and maintain transplant programmes, and notably performed Ghana's first organ transplantation in 2008.

## Result:

Keeping the organs healthy for longer means potential recipients from further afield can benefit.



## Problem:

Potential organ donors were assessed to be unsuitable due to the risk of transmitting cancer to the recipient.



## Response:

The UK's waiting list for donations is around 10,000 and 1,000 people a year die before a suitable donor is found. Dr Rajeev Desai set out to investigate the risk of cancer transmission from organ donors to recipients, with the hope that he would be able to widen the pool of potential donors. His research demonstrated that a small proportion of donors previously rated as high-risk for cancer transmission did not actually pass on the disease following transplantation.

## Result:

The publication of his study led to the rewriting of national guidelines in April 2014 so that more potential donors were passed as fit. While only a small group, they should help reduce waiting times for patients awaiting a donated organ.

## Problem:

The body's natural reaction to a foreign object – in this case a donated organ – is for the immune system to attack the object with white blood cells. Unchecked, this quickly leads to organ rejection.

## Response:

Currently, medication is given to patients to suppress the immune system. As the medication is non-specific, it suppresses all immune system reactions, leaving the patient vulnerable to other illnesses and disease. The medication is required over the lifetime of the transplant, so the risk of a toxic reaction to the medication steadily increases.

Dr Ye Htun Oo is conducting research on regulatory T-cells (a type of white blood cell), isolating and growing them for testing, with the aim of infusing them to restore tolerance in autoimmune liver diseases and prevent rejection of a transplanted liver.

'My primary interest is in how this could help patients with liver diseases and those who received solid organ transplants – replacing daily immunosuppressive medication with one-off or regular interval cell therapy treatments, perhaps just once a year for a fixed period of time,' he says.

## Result:

Dr Oo's research will begin clinical trials in 2016. Watch this space for an update on progress.





## THE PAST

Some of the most significant medical advances made by the University include:

- The research of skin grafts by Nobel Prize winner **Sir Peter Medawar**, Professor of Zoology between 1947 and 1953, provided the foundation for the first successful organ transplant in 1954.

- **Leon Abrams** (MBChB Medicine, 1945) and **Ray Lightwood** (BSc Applied/Pure Science, 1974) together created the first variable-rate heart pacemaker.



- Hip replacement surgery saw a step-change in the 1990s thanks to **Dr Ronan Treacy** (MBChB Medicine, 1983) and **Dr Derek McMinn**, who pioneered Birmingham Hip Resurfacing, which removes the damaged surfaces of the

bones inside the hip joint and replaces them with a metal surface.

- Nobel Prize-winner **Sir Norman Haworth** (MSc Applied/Pure Science, 1926), Mason Professor of Chemistry from 1925 to 1948, devoted his life to pioneering research into carbohydrates. His work culminated in the synthesis of Vitamin C in 1933, which significantly helped to improve health and food production.



- **Dr Chris Poole's** oncology investigations improved breast cancer survival rates by more than 30%, after his team of researchers discovered that adding a new drug to established chemotherapy treatments had a significant impact over standard therapies.

## THE FUTURE

### Problem:

Research from Liam Grover (BMedSc Biomaterials Science, 2001), Professor of Biomaterials Science, could see a major breakthrough in the creation of lab-grown medical implants – a big step on the path towards artificial organs for transplants.



### Response:

Professor Grover's exploration of the interface between synthetic materials and living tissues, alongside clinical partners and researchers in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, is currently focused on the growth of a cruciate ligament that could revolutionise patient recovery from a devastating knee injury.

By fusing ceramics with materials containing human cells taken from a blood transfusion, the aim is to grow the ligament ready for transplantation. The jelly material combines with ceramics and ligament cells to contract and take the shape of the ligament.

Professor Grover says, 'We are still attempting to create new tissue strong enough for clinical trials, but I'm hopeful that in the next decade or so we could see life-changing transplants.'



**Moataz Attallah** (PhD Metallurgy and Materials, 2008), Professor in Advanced Materials Processing, is working with Professor Grover on 3D printing of metallic medical implants that would aid post-operational

care. Drugs contained in the implants are released over time, reducing the risk of infection and inflammation.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Life-changing medical research at Birmingham would not be possible without the 'clean room' contained within the Advanced Therapy Facility.

The only laboratory of its kind in the West Midlands, the Cell Therapy Suite is a specialised unit that uses negative pressure through three hermetically sealed rooms to keep the air as free from contaminants as possible.

Jane Steele, Director of the Human Biomaterials Resource Centre, explains, 'Typically, cells are taken from patients' blood and isolated for purification. Scientists have to wear fully sealed suits to provide a safe, sterile environment for cell and tissue growth and manipulation.'



### How you can help

If you are interested in supporting advances in health research at Birmingham, turn to pages 8–11, or visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/giving](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/giving)

What's your story? These pages are for you to share what you've been doing since leaving Birmingham and to celebrate your successes with fellow alumni. Let us know what you're up to and update your contact information by using the enclosed form or emailing [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk). We will print as many updates as we can.

# YOUR NEWS

## 1940s

**Margaret Honey** (BA English, 1948)

I was one of the first group of freshers to inhabit Winterbourne. During my degree I took part in University orchestral and choral activities and was on the Guild Council. I lived in the Far East for some years before and after my marriage to Raymond, a New Zealander. We eventually settled in rural Herefordshire. I have been thrilled to hear of the new developments, especially the splendid new music building.

**Geoffrey Holroyde**

(BSc Physics, 1949)

My working career was a varied one. I began in the Royal Navy, teaching midshipmen how to navigate. I had two stints leading management training, more than 20 years apart. In the 1970s I was the first Headmaster of Sydney Stringer Community and Comprehensive School in Coventry and then became Director of Coventry Polytechnic. I was Director of Music at St Mary's Church, Warwick and founded and ran the Chapter House Choir at Coventry Cathedral. Aged 67, I graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire with a BMus Music, and I am now an Honorary Fellow there.

## 1950s

**Fred Blick** (LLB Law, 1950)

After retiring from a successful legal practice, I have carried out literary research on Spenser, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Coleridge and published papers in peer-reviewed literary journals.

## 1970s

**Heather Cox (née Smith)** (BA Mathematics/Music, 1977)

Having grown up in the Black Country and moved to Kidderminster in 2006, I was delighted to be named as Worcestershire's Poet Laureate 2015. I have published three illustrated poetry collections and compiled and edited two books of Black Country reminiscences.

## 1980s

**Richard Walden** (MEd Education, 1985)

I retired in August after 18 years as headmaster of Castle House School, Newport, Shropshire. During my career, I was an external examiner on the teacher training courses at the University of Central England in the 1990s, and also spent ten years as a school inspector. In 2014, I was chairman of the Independent Schools Association, one of the five national heads' associations in the Independent Schools Council.

## 1990s

**Somia Shafiq** (BSocSc Money, Banking and Finance, 1995)

I helped Dr Khalid Anis (BDS Clinical Dentistry, 1993) to organise the 2014 Living Islam Festival, which was held at the Lincolnshire Showground. More than 100 speakers spoke at more than 40 seminars covering a breadth of topics, including 'What Do British Values Look Like' by Dr Rowan Williams. We organised the not-for-profit event in our spare time, with 150 other volunteers across 30 departments

helping make the festival a great success. We are already planning the 2016 event.

## 2000s

**Ravinder Singh Chumber** (LLM Commercial Law, 2003)

I recently became a Law Society member for the Small Firms Committee, and also Law Society Council member for Birmingham and District.

**Joseph Flanagan**

(BA Media, Culture and Society, 2008)

I am now the director of my own digital marketing agency based in Birmingham called Rank Easily ([rankeasily.com](http://rankeasily.com)).

I've used the skills learnt from my course to apply to many varied situations within the creative industry.

## 2010s

**Ashley Dickson** (BMus Music, 2010)

I have just returned to the University to study for a Masters in Computer Science. After graduating, I completed the NHS Grad Management Scheme in health informatics management and an MSc in Health Informatics at UCL – hence my interest in IT.

**Ruth Sheaves** (BSc Geography and Environmental Sciences, 2010)

I spent four weeks in Peru this summer volunteering for Projects Abroad, helping with a rainforest conservation project.





## Campus Romances

### Emily Hickey-Mason (BA Sociology, 2014)

Here's a picture of me and my other half, Daniel Baird (LLB Law, 2014). We met at the Guild Awards in our final year and have been inseparable ever since. Three of my other best friends are also still with the partners they met in our final year at university – romance is definitely in the air at UoB!

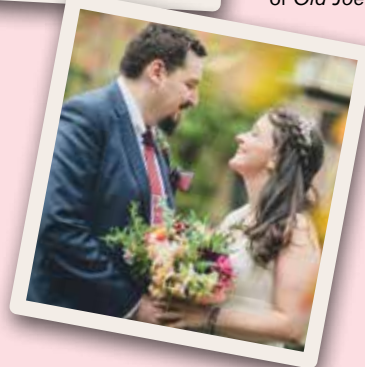


### Did you meet your 'significant other' at Birmingham?

Email [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) with a picture and your story and we'll feature you in the next edition of *Old Joe*.

### Laura East (BA Classics, 2006)

I have been working in the Admissions Department for the University since January 2012, following four years with the NHS. I also belong to the UoB Gilbert and Sullivan Society as an external member and do a lot of theatre in my spare time. I met my husband Chris (BA Classical Literature and Civilisation, 2006) in 2004 through mutual friends in the Classics department and we got married in November 2014. I see my Classics classmates as often as we can but I would be thrilled to hear about any upcoming reunions in Birmingham.



## Queen's Birthday Honours 2015

Congratulations to all alumni who were awarded Honours in 2015.



- **The Rt Hon The Lord Woolf of Barnes CH**  
(LLD Honorary Degree, 2002)
- **Sir Christopher Munro Clark KB**  
(DLitt Honorary Degree, 2014)
- **Sir Peter Downes KB**  
(PhD Biochemistry, 1981)
- **Sir Thomas Jeffery KB**  
(Cultural Studies, 1991)
- **Dame Frances Cairncross DBE**  
(DSc Honorary Degree, 2002)
- **Dr Simon Halsey CBE**  
(DMus Honorary Degree, 2008)
- **Dr Mark-Anthony Turnage CBE**  
(DMus Honorary Degree, 2005)
- **Margaret Manning OBE**  
(BSc Psychology, 1983)
- **Professor Judith Cross OBE**  
(MBChB Medicine, 1984)
- **Dr Nicholas Harding OBE**  
(Inter BSc Pharmacology, 1991, MBChB Medicine 1994)
- **Professor Anita MacDonald OBE**  
(PhD Paediatrics and Child Health, 1999)
- **Peter McPartland OBE**  
(BPhil (Ed) Education, 1984)
- **Dr Matthew O'Callaghan OBE**  
(BSc Chemistry, 1974)
- **Maureen Boylan OBE**  
(MA English, 1978)
- **Professor Gwyn Griffiths MBE**  
(MSc Information and Systems Engineering, 1976)
- **Julia Grove MBE**  
(BPhil (Ed) Education with Distinction, 1989)
- **Dr Judith Hooper MBE**  
(MBChB Medicine, 1978)
- **Andrew Jackson MBE**  
(MSc Plant Genetic Resources, 1988)
- **Claire Layland MBE**  
(PG Diploma Special Education: Speech and Language Disorders, 1999)
- **Ann McDonald MBE**  
(Social Services Management, 1993)
- **Councillor Frances Oborski MBE**  
(BPhil (Ed) Education, 1978)
- **Dr Nigel O'Connor MBE**  
(Occ UG, 2000)
- **Dr Clare Taylor MBE**  
(MPH Health and Population Sciences, 2010)
- **Sergeant Helena Thomas QVRM**  
(BA English, 1979)

If you are a Birmingham alumnus who was awarded a birthday honour and your name is not included here, please accept our apologies and email [alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) with your details.

# Honorary graduates

Fifteen outstanding individuals and alumni received honorary degrees in July 2015.

**1 Dr Clive Hickman – Doctor of Engineering**  
Clive is Chief Executive of the Manufacturing Technology Centre, part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult which bridges the gap between academic research and industrial exploitation. He previously held numerous positions in the automotive industry.

**2 Lim Ming Yan – Doctor of the University**  
President and Group CEO of CapitaLand, Lim is also a Board Member of the Building and Construction Authority of Singapore, as well as a Board Member of the Singapore Tourism Board.

**3 Lord Victor Adebawale, CBE – Doctor of the University**  
Lord Adebawale is Chief Executive of Turning Point, providing health and social care services for people with complex needs, including those affected by substance misuse, mental ill health and learning disabilities.

**4 Chancellor Phyllis Wise – Doctor of Science**  
Phyllis is Chancellor of the University of Illinois, and previously was interim President of the University of Washington, where she had served as Provost and Executive Vice President for five years.

**5 Professor Pascale Cossart – Doctor of Science**  
Educated as a chemist, Pascale obtained a MS at Georgetown University and a PhD at the Institut Pasteur, where she is now Professeur de Classe Exceptionnelle. She pioneered the introduction of cell biology approaches in infection biology.

**6 Gregory Doran – Doctor of Letters**  
Gregory is the Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. In January 2016 his productions of *Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts One and Two*, and *Henry V* at the Barbican will launch the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

**7 Billie Major – Alumna of the Year**  
See page 31.

**8 James Eder – Alumnus of the Year**  
See page 31.

**9 Professor Philip Sugarman – Doctor of Medicine**  
Philip retired in 2014 after a decade running the United Kingdom's charity sector's largest NHS provider, St Andrew's Healthcare, helping to open several new specialist teaching hospitals.

**10 Dr Clifford Cocks, CB – Doctor of Science**  
In his career at GCHQ, Clifford developed the first workable system of Public Key Cryptography, now the foundation for secure internet communications.



**11 Andy Street – Doctor of the University**  
The Managing Director of John Lewis since 2007, Andy is Chair of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, the body tasked with driving economic growth in the region.

**12 Ajit Kumar Seth – Doctor of the University**  
Ajit is Head of the Civil Services and the highest ranking civil servant in India. In a 40-year distinguished career, he has served in important capacities involving field administration, diplomacy and policy making.

**13 Simon Stevens – Doctor of the University**  
Simon is Chief Executive Officer of NHS England. He spent seven years acting as the Prime Minister's Health Adviser at the Department of Health and a decade running international health services across the globe.

**14 Dame Una O'Brien, DCB – Doctor of the University**  
The Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, Una has 25 years' experience of government and health policy, with previous senior roles in the department including Director General of Strategy.

**15 Ed Smith, CBE – Doctor of the University**  
The Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council of the University of Birmingham, Ed is Chairman of Crown Commercial Services, Deputy Chairman of NHS England and lead non-executive director of the Department for Transport.

## Competition winners

Thank you to everyone who entered last issue's competitions. Helen Rees (BNurs Health Sciences, 2009) won branded University merchandise, and Deepak Thuse (BSc Computer Science, 1999) won Narinder Dharmi's top five books. Julie Steele (BA Latin, 1977) was the lucky winner of a day class at the Royal School of Needlework.

# WIN



## Have you been paying attention?

For your chance to win University merchandise, just answer this question:

### What is the name of the University's 300,000th alumna?

Email your answer, with your name, address, and telephone number to: [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk), or post them to *Old Joe*, Alumni Office, University of Birmingham, Birmingham Research Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2SQ, by 31 December 2015. Terms and conditions apply: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumniconmunications](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumniconmunications).

## Children's corner

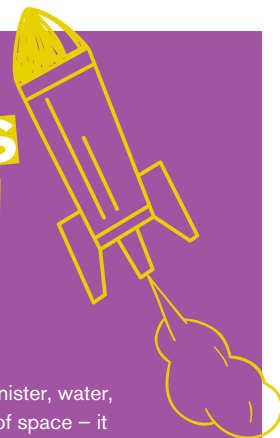
### Rattle a Researcher returns!

You may remember the competition in last autumn's edition of *Old Joe* to baffle the University's experts with your children's trickiest questions. From atoms to aliens there were some fantastic questions for the University's academics, and now Rattle a Researcher is back for more of your tough teasers.

The University has experts in everything from dinosaurs to dentistry, physics to philosophy, so if there are any questions to which you have always wanted the answer – now is the time to ask.

To enter, email your child's question to [alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumniconmunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk) with the subject 'Rattle a Researcher' or tweet [@birminghamalum](https://twitter.com/birminghamalum) using [#rattlearesearcher](https://twitter.com/birminghamalum). Please include your child's name, and age (competition open to under-18s only); plus your own name, address, degree subject and year of graduation by **31 December 2015**.

## TRY THIS AT HOME



### Make a rocket

You will need a 35mm film canister, water, a vitamin C tablet and plenty of space – it is best to create your rocket outdoors.

1. Fill the canister a third of the way up with water.
2. Add a quarter of the tablet to the water.
3. Snap the lid on top and quickly give it a shake, then turn it over so the lid is touching the ground.
4. Stand back and wait – it will take longer than you think, so give it some time.
5. Bang! You have now made a rocket!

As the tablet fizzes more in the water the fizz (carbon dioxide) builds up inside the canister and the pressure increases causing the canister to fly up!



# OLD JOE

## IS GOING DIGITAL

Don't worry – the University isn't altering the face of its historic clock tower, but *Old Joe* magazine is going digital with a great new online edition to complement our lovely print version.

From the next issue of *Old Joe* you will be able to read the latest news from across campus, share memories with fellow alumni, and enter fantastic competitions from your phone, tablet, and computer.

The digital edition of *Old Joe* will be much more than just an online version of the magazine. You will be able to:

- Click straight through to more detailed content
- Register immediately for events and competitions
- View image galleries
- Watch video interviews
- Directly submit your stories and magazine feedback
- Read *Old Joe* anytime, anywhere, and on any device
- Receive additional news and updates from your School and College



### HAVE WE GOT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

The next issue of *Old Joe* will be the first digital-only edition, distributed to our email database. If you're not already receiving email from the University, please send your contact email address to [alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk) with the subject heading 'Digital Old Joe' by 31 December 2015. You'll be entered into a prize draw to win a University hoodie.



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