

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

School of Chemistry Community

Part of
THE EPS COMMUNITY



Summer 2014

Greetings

As I walked across campus in July I watched crowds of our most recent graduates walking out of the Aston Webb Building proudly holding their certificates, and posing for those memorable photos with family and friends. It is a wonderful time of year, a time to celebrate all the hard work our students have put in over the last three, or four (maybe even more) years of their respective degrees.

As you will see from this newsletter, our academics have also been busy – not only with marking hundreds of exam papers, but with their own research, including [Dr John Fossey developing a transformative new approach to glucose sensor devices](#), and the [launch of a new postgraduate taught Masters degree in Drug Discovery and Medicinal Chemistry](#). The School has also just received a [£1 million award for new equipment](#).

It has been a busy time in the School and across the College with a number of 'firsts', including the first annual [EPS Reunion](#) which took place on 14 June with over 170 alumni in attendance. We also hosted a panel event, '[Engineering a sustainable future](#)', in addition to a number of other activities in recognition of the first ever National Women in Engineering Day, celebrating women's contribution to engineering and science professions.

Lastly, but certainly not least, our first [EPS Societies' Awards](#) was held on 6 June celebrating the fantastic achievements of our student body in delivering an exciting programme of events, projects and challenges over the course of the year as part of their involvement in our School societies. With a live student band providing entertainment and 10 highly sought-after award categories, it really was a night to remember.

As the final curtain falls on the 2013-14 academic year, I'd like to wish you all a pleasant and restful summer and I look forward to updating you with the latest news from the School and our new students in the Autumn Term.

With best wishes,

Professor Jon Preece
Head of School
Chemistry

In this issue...

[News from the School](#)

[New staff](#)

[Your School needs you](#)

[Events taking place](#)

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News from the School of Chemistry

Congratulations Class of 2014!



On behalf of all academic and support staff in the School of Chemistry, we'd like to say huge congratulations to all our new graduates who received their degree certifications earlier in July after lots of hard work and dedication! [Read more.](#)

'A great day was had by all'



On Saturday 14 June 2014 we welcomed alumni from across the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences back to the University for a special day of celebrations and activities with fellow classmates and staff. Over 170 alumni and guests from as far back as 1946 up to our 2013 graduates attended this annual College Reunion, which was open to all graduating years for the very first time. Read about the day and access photographs [here.](#)

Chemists at Birmingham celebrate £1 million award for new equipment



The School of Chemistry celebrated the installation of new equipment in July as a result of a £1 million award from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's core capability grant, and match funding from the University in excess of £500,000. [Read more.](#)

Transformative new approach to glucose sensor devices



Dr John S. Fossey, Lecturer in Synthetic Chemistry, along with others from across the University, nationally and internationally have developed new glucose sensors based on the principle of self-assembly and surface plasmon resonance optical technique. Their research recently featured as front and inside cover articles for *Analyst*. [Read the paper here.](#)

Natural medicine is great, but chemists can make it even better



For years humans have searched for medicines in nature. While some seek "natural cures" in order to avoid chemicals, in truth everything is made up of chemistry. But as humans, we're very good at manipulating what we find in nature. Simon Cotton discusses natural medicines for *The Conversation*. Read

EPS Societies' Awards



On Friday 6 June 2014 the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences celebrated the achievements of our student societies with the first ever EPS Societies' Awards. We have a strong tradition of outstanding educational success; from public astronomy events with AstroSoc to designing Formula Student cars with UBRacing, the societies do astonishing work not just in academia but also to promote careers opportunities, industrial visits and, of course, social events. Organising committee member and Mechanical Engineering student Daisy Partlow tells us about the night [here](#). Winners, nominations and photographs are also available on our [website](#).

National Women in Engineering Day celebrated at the University



In celebration of the UK's first ever National Women in Engineering Day on 23 June 2014, the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences organised a programme of events and activities, including a panel event discussing 'Engineering a sustainable future' with leading female engineers and academics. View interviews and videos from the day [here.](#)

Molecules have no morals: ecstasy godfather Alexander Shulgin's legacy



Honorary Senior Lecturer Simon Cotton comments on the 'ecstasy godfather' Alexander Shulgin's links to MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylamphetamine) for The Conversation. [Read more.](#)

Developments in drug discovery and medicinal chemistry



The University is developing a number of initiatives in the area of molecular drug discovery. An exciting addition this year has been the launch of a new postgraduate taught Masters degree in Drug Discovery and Medicinal Chemistry. [Read more.](#)

My Shrieval Year



Chemistry alumna Deborah Inskip shares the story of her varied career and her year as High Sheriff of Bedfordshire. [Read here.](#)

New staff in 2014

There have been a number of appointments in the School this term. [Read a summary of our new staff online here.](#)

Your School needs you...

Would you be able to share some of your time, expertise or connections to help our students to succeed?

We're currently looking for help and support from alumni with the following:

- Work experience placements are invaluable for our students, allowing them to learn about the world of work first-hand and apply their knowledge in a real-life setting. If you work in industry and think you could offer a work experience placement to our undergraduate or postgraduate students, please [email us](#)

There are many ways in which you can give a little back, from providing a career profile, to mentoring a student. Please [email us](#) if you would like to get involved and we'll be happy to talk to you.

Events taking place shortly...

College and School events

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EPS Inaugural Lecture Series

For more information on other lectures in the EPS Inaugural Lecture Series please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/inaugural

Monday 22 – Saturday 27 September 2014

Trusting Atoms: The Last Trials of Ludwig Boltzmann

of the 19th Century. Join Ludwig Boltzmann in his battle to save the dying theory of atoms, his equation and so his career in a hostile scientific environment.

Venue: Cadbury Room, St Francis Hall, Edgbaston Campus

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/eps/events/Trusting-Atoms.aspx>

Thursday 6 November 2014

EPS Distinguished Lecture: Professor Paul Cannon

Minor explosive eruptions of energy from the Sun that cause small solar storms on Earth are relatively common events. In contrast, extremely large events (superstorms) only occur very occasionally – perhaps once every century or two. Since the start of the space age, there has been no true solar-superstorm, but there have been a number of large storms and some of these have caused major technological damage, for example the partial collapse of the Canadian electricity grid in 1989

Venue: EPS College, Edgbaston Campus

www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/distinguished-Nov14

Monday 8 – Wednesday 10 December 2014

International Conference on High Speed Rail - 8th-10th December 2014

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the first Shinkansen high speed line in Japan. The University of Birmingham is marking this historic occasion by holding an international conference on High Speed Rail

Venue: Edgbaston Campus

highspeedrail64@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Wednesday 10 December 2014

EPS Christmas Lecture – Professor Jim Al-Khalili OBE

Please join us to hear from Professor Jim Al-Khalili, Presenter of The Life Scientific on Radio 4, British scientist, author and broadcaster as he delivers the inaugural EPS Christmas Lecture

Venue: The Great Hall, Edgbaston Campus

www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/christmaslecture

March 2015

EPS Distinguished Lecture: Prof Dr PE Seeram Ramakrishna

Prof Dr PE Seeram Ramakrishna is the Director of the Centre for Nanofibers & Nanotechnology at the National University of Singapore

Venue: EPS College, Edgbaston Campus

www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/distinguished-Mar15

Tuesday 9 June 2015

EPS Societies' Awards Night

Come and celebrate with our student societies as we recognise their fabulous achievements in 2014/15

Venue: The Great Hall, Edgbaston Campus

www.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/societies-awards-2015

Saturday 20 June 2015

EPS Alumni Reunion

As a graduate of one of the nine schools in the College of Engineering & Physical Sciences (EPS), you are invited back to campus for a Summer Reunion to get together with your fellow alumni to celebrate your experiences, accomplishments and friendships at the University of Birmingham

Venue: Edgbaston Campus

www.birmingham.ac.uk/epsreunion2015

University events

Saturday 6 – Thursday 11 September 2014

British Science Festival 2014

The British Science Festival celebrates all things scientific and will be hosted by the University of Birmingham in September 2014. Organised by the British Science Association, the event offers something for everyone

Venue: Birmingham City Centre and Edgbaston Campus

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/british-science-festival/index.aspx>

Thursday 11 September 2014

Alumni Reception at the British Science Festival

Join fellow alumni for drinks and nibbles on the final day of the British Science Festival.

Venue: Marquee, Chancellors Court, University of Birmingham

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events/items/BSF-Alumni.aspx>

Saturday 13 September 2014

GGAA 2014 Forum & AGM

Join members of the Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association (GGAA) for their 2014 Forum and AGM. This year's speaker is the Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe.

Venue: Edgbaston Campus

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events/items/GGAA-2014-Forum--AGM.aspx>

Saturday 13 September 2014

[Golden and 50th Anniversary Reunion](#)

Alumni who graduated in 1964 or before are welcome to join for a special reunion lunch

Venue: Edgbaston Campus

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events/items/Golden50th-Anniversary-Reunion---13-September-2014-.aspx>

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