



Autumn 2013

Greetings

There was a great feeling of achievement and pride when the Chancellor presented degrees to over 600 of this year's College graduands in the summer ceremonies. This is the last year that Sir Dominic Cadbury will present degrees, completing 11 years of service as Chancellor. I have always been impressed by his utter commitment to the task and over his tenure he has shaken hands with the majority of our graduands from the College. Over the last couple of years he has also been especially supportive to the College in making links with industrial and external bodies in the UK and overseas. This is all part of the network of being a Birmingham alumnus. You will be able to read more about Sir Dominic's legacy on page 20 of the new Birmingham Alumni Magazine *Old Joe* which you should receive very soon.

The positive and optimistic spirit of the graduation ceremonies was underscored by the fact that the demand for science and engineering graduates is at an all-time high, contrary to the rhetoric in the press. In particular we have experienced uplift in student employability across the College. For example, last year the employability (those in employment within six months of graduation) ranged from 78-93% across the Schools.

As many of you will be aware, the face of Higher Education in the UK is forever changing - and the only thing that is certain is that next year is different to this year! We have been delighted to see very strong admissions to the College for the coming 13/14 academic year in undergraduate and most postgraduate programmes. The market place for home students will become increasingly competitive and the role of Open Days and the like assumes increasing importance as part of the whole admissions and "conversion process". We have over 38,000 alumni from EPS with whom we are in contact and it has been a pleasure to welcome alumni back to support some of the Open Days and to other alumni events in Schools.

This academic year we will be continuing our series of [Inaugural Lectures](#) for newly appointed professors and all are welcome at these public events. We are also starting a Distinguished Lecture series across the College so do look out for this. I hope to have the opportunity to meet some of you at these events.

Current students value contact with alumni and our work to support this includes alumni mentoring, scholarships for research internships (within the University or internationally) and offers of placements in organisations and enterprises owned by EPS alumni. Your input, ideas and suggestions are most welcome around these or other areas. The impact of this on changing the lives of students can be both profound and rewarding.



With sincere best wishes

Professor Richard Williams

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Top stories from the College

From *The Birmingham Brief* - Social media: why the case for teaching digital literacy is so compelling



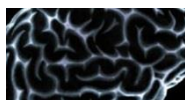
As a parent, I can only start to imagine the pain, grief and suffering of the family of Hannah Smith, who committed suicide recently after being bullied on the ask.fm website. Almost daily, fresh headlines emerge about social media sites like Twitter being used to issue threats of rape, violence and murder. My visceral, emotional, immediate reaction is much like everyone else: something must be done. [Read more..](#)

The hydrophobic egg found on many coastal cliff faces



The humble guillemot – a penguinesque bird with a questionable domestic demeanour but a remarkable self-cleaning egg – has been making the headlines lately. These cliff-dwelling, coastal birds may not make nests or take home hygiene too seriously, but their eggs have found a way to shake off the detritus and sea salt that could otherwise cause them to suffocate by having super-hydrophobic qualities. [Read more..](#)

A new tool for brain research



Physicists and neuroscientists from The University of Nottingham and University of Birmingham have unlocked one of the mysteries of the human brain, thanks to new research using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG). [Read more..](#)

Food Scientists work on fooling hunger pangs



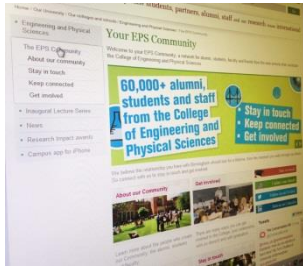
Feeling full for longer to satisfy appetites and help reduce snacking between meals is one of the solutions to reducing the amount of food we eat. Chemical engineers may have the answer as they develop special ingredients that have the potential to reduce hunger pangs once inside the stomach. [Read more...](#)

Robots that learn from experience



Specialist robots will learn how to act intelligently in real-world environments, supporting security guards or care home assistants, in a multi-million Euro project. The aim of the research is to create mobile robots that are able to operate intelligently and independently, based on an understanding of 3D space and how this space changes over time, from milliseconds to months. Read the full story [here](#) or see our features in The [Telegraph](#), [Independent](#) and [The Engineer](#).

An update from your Community



We are looking forward to the start of a new academic year, especially as this year we will be trying to meet as many new students as possible to let them know about the EPS Community and how they can be a part of it right from the start of their time here. This will be the first group of students to have this advantage and we hope they will make the most of it.

We have been busy over the summer, working on more ways to help you keep informed of what is happening in your College.

The most major initiative has been the launch of the new [EPS Community pages](#) on the College website, and pages for each school. These provide information on how you can [stay in touch](#), [keep connected](#) and [get involved](#) with your school and the College as a whole. These will continue to be updated over time and we would [welcome your feedback on them](#).

This year I would like to challenge you to consider how you might give one hour of your time to impact the life of a student. Would you be able to provide a career profile, be available for students to talk to you about your industry, offer a placement or recruit into your company? There [are many ways you can make a real difference](#) and we would love to talk to you about how.

Kathryn Chedgzoy, College Alumni Relations Manager

P.S. [Fill in a career profile and we will send you one of our new trolley key rings!](#)

Students go global thanks to the Bill Willetts Science Scholarship

Three more students have received financial support from the Bill Willetts Science Scholarship as the award moves into its second year. The scholarship is available for any undergraduate in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences or the discipline of Earth Sciences, to fund travel for extra-curricular projects. [Read the full story here](#).

Why was it you studied at Birmingham? What was the best thing about your time here?

Our current and prospective students would love to hear how it was you came to study at Birmingham and how life has been since.

Would you be able to come to campus on the 16 October to record some of your memories and words of wisdom, and then join us for networking drinks so that some of our current students can meet with the you and hear your experiences first-hand?

We would love to hear from anyone, but particularly those who came to Birmingham from overseas and are now working in the UK.

For more information or to express your interest, please contact Kathryn Chedgzoy k.a.chedgzoy@bham.ac.uk

EPS events taking place shortly...

[Professor Peter Butkovic Inaugural Lecture](#)

School of Mathematics

25/09/2013

Lecture Theatre A, Watson Building (R15), University of Birmingham

... And Beautiful is Useful ... The Perron-Frobenius theory of nonnegative matrices, created a century ago, is one of the most elegant theories in mathematics. In recent years it has found remarkable real-life applications, for instance it was used in the design of Google in a way that enabled it to become a world leading search engine.

Professor Andrew Howes Inaugural Lecture

School of Computer Science

08/10/2013

More details to come, keep an eye on our [website](#)

[Food Microbiology for Enforcement and Industry](#)

15 - 16/10/2013

A food microbiology course for enforcement and industry is being held on the 15th and 16th October 2013 at the University of Birmingham. Aware that both enforcement agencies and industry have very limited time and budgets in the current economic climate, the course has been designed to allow delegates to either attend one or two days. To register please email Gill Burrows on g.burrows@bham.ac.uk

[Birmingham Heroes Lecture: Music of the Stars](#)

17/10/2013 (18:15-20:30)

This will be the second Birmingham Heroes lecture to be held in Birmingham and will see Professor Chaplin reprise his 'Music of the Stars' lecture given at the Institute of Physics in May 2013.

Professor Russell Beale Inaugural Lecture

School of Computer Science

22/10/2013

More details to come, keep an eye on our [website](#)

Professor Charalampos Baniotopoulos Inaugural Lecture

School of Civil Engineering

13/11/2013

More details to come, keep an eye on our [website](#)

Professor Alberto Vecchio Inaugural Lecture

School of Physics and Astronomy

27/11/2013

More details to come, keep an eye on our [website](#)

Professor Robert Steinberger-Wilckens Inaugural Lecture

School of Chemical Engineering

04/12/2013

More details to come, keep an eye on our [website](#)

University events...

[University of Birmingham Guild of Graduates Alumni Association \(GGAA\) 2013 Forum and 107th AGM](#)

14/09/2013

Senate Chamber, Aston Webb Building, Edgbaston campus

All alumni are invited to attend the annual Guild of Graduates and Alumni Association 106th Forum and AGM.

[Undergraduate Open Day](#)

14/09/2013

Visit the University, meet our staff and students and learn about our degrees.

[Canadian Alumni Chapter Annual Garden Party](#)

22/09/2013

Join the Canadian Alumni Chapter for their annual Garden Party.

[Undergraduate Open Day](#)

26/10/2013

Visit the University, meet our staff and students and learn about our degrees.

[Book to the Future](#)

24 - 29/10/2013

University of Birmingham

A festival celebrating the written and spoken word, featuring our academic, student and local talent as well as well-known alumni authors, poets, playwrights, journalists and scriptwriters.

[House of Lords Reception SOLD OUT](#)

08/11/2013

House of Lords, London

Join your fellow alumni at the tenth annual House of Lords reception this autumn.

[University Carol Service](#)

09/12/2013

Great Hall, Aston Webb Building, Edgbaston campus

This annual event, organised by University Chaplains and the Department of Music, is a joyful Christmas celebration for staff, students and families.

[Festive Drinks at the Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market](#)

13/12/2013

Victoria Square, Birmingham City Centre

Join fellow alumni for a festive drink at the largest authentic German market outside Germany and Austria.

Do we have the right details for you?

According to our records your current business details are as follows: **Position** at **Organisation Name** If this is not correct, please visit your.bham or email alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk

You have received this email from the University of Birmingham because we believe that it is relevant and of interest to you. If you would like to opt-out of receiving information from your College, School or Department by email, please opt-out by visiting your.bham, emailing alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk, or telephoning +44 (0)121 414 2773 / 2744 / 4724. In order to further tailor the communication we send, all emails are tracked and processed; further information regarding our use of data, is available by looking at our [data protection statement](#)